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RESPECTING

IRAQ

PART 21

January to December 1967

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IRAQ - 1967

PART 21

TABLE OF CONTENTS

No.	Name	Date	Subject
1.	Sir Richard Beaumont No.2	9 Jan.	Annual Review for 1966.
2.	Sir Richard Beaumont No.6	27 Jan.	The Position of the Armed Forces in the State.
3.	Sir Richard Beaumont No.7	7 Feb.	Ministry of Overseas Development Aid Programme to Iraq for 1966.
4.	Mr. Pemberton-Pigott No.8	6 Mar.	State Visit of President Arif to Turkey: 20 - 26 February.
5.	Sir Richard Beaumont No.13	2 June	The Administration of Naji Talib.
6.	Sir Richard Beaumont Unnumbered	31 July	The Break of Diplomatic Relations with Iraq.
7.	Foreign Office Unnumbered	-	Calendar of Events - 1967.

SUBJECT INDEX

(The figures show the order in which the
papers appear in the volume)

Aid Programme for 1966, Ministry of Overseas Development	3
Anglo-Iraqi relations	1, 6
Annual review for 1966	1
Armed Forces - Defence Attaché's annual report	2
Britain - break of diplomatic relations	6
Economic affairs	1, 2, 5
Internal affairs	1, 5, 6
Naji Talib's administration	5
Oil - Iraq/I.P.C. and Syrian/I.P.C. crises	1, 5, 6
Turkey - visit of President Arif	4

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IRAQ
13 January, 1967
Section 1

IRAQ: ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1966

Sir Richard Beaumont to Mr. Brown. (Received 13 January)

SUMMARY

A year of muddle, which has shown up the vast weaknesses of both Constitution and economy. Worst of all, the flow of two-thirds of Iraq's oil ceased in December, reviving a traditional nightmare. (Paragraph 1.)

2. The death of Abdul Salam Arif and the peaceful election of his brother to succeed him was the result of Bazzaz's management and withdrawal from the ring. The militarists' failure in Kurdistan enabled Bazzaz to launch his proposals for a settlement, but army opposition mounted ominously. Bazzaz was saved momentarily by Razzaq's second abortive *coup* but finally dropped in August. (Paragraphs 2-3.)

3. Bazzaz's many good points were counterbalanced by the defects of his personality. His departure generally regretted. His successor, Naji Talib, a Shia Arab Nationalist, already saved twice from dismissal by President Nasser, has firmly dissociated himself from President Arif's more independently Iraqi policies, particularly over Kuwait, the Kurds, and relations with Iran. On oil Naji has broken new and unwelcome ground, largely on the advice of extremists. (Paragraphs 4-5.)

4. Even before the Syrian/IPC dispute came to a head, Iraq had been chronically short of money and looked to the petroleum sector to provide it. An "oil experts' committee" was set up to study ways and means of maximising income. The market remained depressed throughout 1966 due to political uncertainties but some big foreign-aided projects came along, if slowly. (Paragraphs 6-7.)

5. What of the future? Internally, the three-year "transitional period" comes to an end, with the Interim Constitution, in April; but, as elections are clearly out of the question at present, it will almost certainly be prolonged. The various minority groupings financed from outside Iraq, viz., the Nasserists, Baathists and Communists, cannot come to power legitimately, and may try forcibly to overthrow the President and his chosen régime. A prolonged interruption of the oil flow could give extremists a golden chance. (Paragraph 8.)

6. Externally, Iraq has remained unaligned but with a bias in favour of the Soviet Union and East European countries, largely because of a complex about Western "imperialism". The President remains against excessive UAR influence in Iraq but is fearful of Nasser's potential to do harm here. The Egyptians knowing this have no compunction in calling the President to order. Not even the Prime Minister's inept handling of the oil crisis has tempted the President to intervene on behalf of Iraq's interests, thus risking the solidarity of the extreme Nationalist States. (Paragraph 9.)

7. Relations with Great Britain remain officially good but in fact only middling. Pachachi's continuance in office as Foreign Minister has helped; he is a professional. Commercially, the

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inhibitions have been on our side; the larger firms of engineering contractors still suspect Iraq's creditworthiness, and, despite encouragement from this Embassy, London has been unwilling to take a chance here—unlike many of competitors, who are getting dug in. (Paragraph 10.)

(No. 2. Confidential)
Sir,

Baghdad,
9 January, 1967.

I have the honour to enclose with this despatch the annual review and chronological summary of events in Iraq for the year 1966.

2. I am sending copies of this despatch and of its first enclosure only to Her Majesty's Representatives at Algiers, Amman, Ankara, Basra, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Kuwait, Jeddah, Moscow, Tehran, Bahrain, Tel Aviv and Washington; to the Political Officer, Middle East Command (Aden), and to the Secretary, JIG, Cyprus (Nicosia).

I have, &c.

R. A. BEAUMONT.

Enclosure

Annual Review for 1966

Iraq has muddled painfully through another year! The weaknesses in the constitutional and economic structures of the State have been only too clearly exposed. A President killed, a *coup d'état* aborted, a perpetual shortage of cash and worse to come, probably, as a result of a poor harvest and defective agricultural policies with a consequent need to import grain; and last and worst, the closure in December of the pipelines from Kirkuk to the Mediterranean.

2. On the 13th of April President Abdul Salam Arif, that man of blood, met his fate in a helicopter crash. It appears to have been an act of God, though there are still those (probably including his brother) who say it was not. In him disappeared the last of the two "historic" leaders of the 1958 revolution. He was not regretted. But he left behind a problem of succession. The reins of constitutional authority lay with the civilian Prime Minister, Dr. Abdul Rahman al-Bazzaz: the power lay with the generals. The National Defence Council sitting

jointly with the Cabinet met and, in accordance with Article 55 of the Interim Constitution of the 29th of April, 1964, elected Major-General Abdul Rahman Arif, Acting Chief of Staff and brother of the dead man, as President for a one-year term—the remaining period of validity, bar 12 days, of the Interim Constitution. The sense of emergency, the division between the generals, the lobbying of Dr. Bazzaz and, perhaps, the rather unwelcome presence of a strong delegation from the United Arab Republic which had arrived only a few hours after Abdul Salam's death, all led to this speedy compromise choice of a man, judged essentially decent and well-intentioned, but a political and military lightweight. On votes in the electoral body Bazzaz, had he tried really hard and made some concessions, might have got the presidency for himself, but he had the sense to realise that it would be by a narrow margin and with the five divisional commanders nearly all opposed to him. It would have been a hollow and short-lived triumph. He therefore worked for the compromise candidate.

3. King-makers are not long popular especially with the kings they make; and so it was with Bazzaz. His realism over the presidential election was not matched by discretion in public utterance. He soon reverted to criticism of the military—calling for the soldiers to return to their barracks—in the Press conferences and television appearances to which he was addicted. He insulted the army's pride—and, some said, its pockets—by advocating a compromise peace with the Kurds in the north; and, what was worse, was shown to be right, when the long-delayed spring offensive suffered a severe setback at Kurdish hands on Jebel Handrin and Jebel Zuzak (near Rowanduz) in mid-May. In early June the National Defence Council meeting in Kirkuk decided to end the campaign and on the 29th of June the Prime Minister announced his 12-point plan for peace in Kurdistan. At this moment the sands of time were running out for Bazzaz; but he was saved for a spell by the attempted

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coup d'état on the 30th of June of Air Brigadier Arif Abdul Razzaq. It was an inept second attempt but nearer to success than was originally thought. Its clearly Egyptian origin (though the UAR betrayed it at the 13th hour), and the consequent uncertainty led to a momentary closing of Iraqi ranks, making a change of Government impossible. So Bazzaz survived until, returning from an official visit to Moscow early in August and on the crest of a wave of euphoria (a beverage to which he has shown himself partial), the Opposition finally made its weight felt and the President, tired almost certainly of his leading-strings, dropped the king-maker.

4. What can one say of the Bazzaz Government? It lasted almost 11 months—in itself remarkable. It had an undoubtedly humanising effect on the Iraqi body politic. It brought the Government much nearer to the people than before both because it was essentially civilian and also by means of explanatory television interviews by both the Prime Minister and his Ministers. It secured peace in the north partially because of the personal confidence the Kurdish leaders placed in Bazzaz. But apart from that it did nothing momentous. Eleven months is in any case not long and, throughout, Bazzaz had to take into account the vested interests of the army whose grip on half the Iraqi revenue had to be loosened if economic and social progress were to be made. Moreover, the undoubted good points of the Prime Minister were counter-balanced by the defects of his personality. Idealist and passionate Arab Nationalist for years but without administrative or ministerial experience, he found difficulty in achieving a synthesis between his pre-conceptions and the realities of the Iraqi situation in such a way as to foster practical action. Professor, he pursued, even as Prime Minister, the politics of the schools. With army and university against him, the way forward would have been hard indeed. He left, but by the public at large he has been regretted.

5. His successor did nothing to diminish those regrets. Naji Talib: a Shia Arab, regarded as a renegade by most of his co-religionists, a young revolutionary now *un peu sur l'âge*, in many ways a "Qasimite", i.e., anti-Kurd and anti-Kuwaiti, with a flair for taking the line of least political resistance. Although Prime Minister, he has felt able not to identify

himself with the acts of policy which the President, by now feeling his way, has been advocating and, indeed, making. He tacitly dissociated himself from the President's policy of friendliness to Iraq's neighbours, Kuwait and Iran. He was hardly any more forthcoming with Turkey. He accepted or, rather, did not repudiate—because he knew all hell would be let loose—Bazzaz's 12 points for a Kurdish settlement, but he quite clearly does not believe in them. He was not present when the President met Mulla Mustafa at the end of October. The Minister of State for Northern Affairs, Ahmad Kamal Qadir, quite openly favours a different policy from his Prime Minister, but Naji Talib purposely has given him no money to pursue it. Finally, Naji Talib's stand over the future of Arif Abdul Razzaq, the author of the attempted *coup* of the 30th of June, has been diametrically opposed to the President's, who is committed to bringing him to trial. Indeed, had it not been for intervention in Naji Talib's favour by President Nasser in early and again in late November, he would almost certainly have been dismissed and Iraq presumably dropped from the list of self-styled "progressive" countries. But this horrendous thought undoubtedly gave President Arif pause. The one problem Naji Talib did face up to was that of oil. He had opposed the Wattari Agreements of 1965 and therefore far from ratifying them determined to get better terms. In his capacity as Acting Minister of Oil he first called on the Iraq Petroleum Company to produce more oil in Iraq in accordance with OPEC recommendations. Here and subsequently he was largely "teleguided" by the Saudi ex-Minister of Petroleum Affairs, Shaikh Abdullah Turaiki, through the Nasserist former Minister of Industry, Adib al-Jadir, and a pressure group behind them. Naji saw himself (though I think the vision may be fading) in the role of a successful Musaddiq imposing on the IPC in respect of its proven fields in North Rumaila (near Basra) the terms conceded by the French firm ERAP in its agreement with the National Iranian Oil Co. on an unproved area in Iran. The ultimatum issued by Naji Talib on this subject to the IPC, which was due to expire on the 31st of December, threatened to do as much as the Syrian Government's stoppage of the oil flow from Kirkuk to the Mediterranean to disrupt relations between the Iraq Government and the company, and hence, probably, the revenues of the Iraqi State.

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6. The Government of Bazzaz had let well alone where oil was concerned. It had not ratified the draft Agreements of 1965 and was content to take its revenues under the old (1952) arrangements. But as 1966 went on it was clear that the revenues were insufficient for Government needs. In the first place the development programme of earlier years was beginning to require serious financing in its executive stages. In the second, the war in the north was costing the State a quarter of a million pounds or more a day and even when active operations ended, the requirements for the Ministry of Defence still increased. Indeed, a demand for a supplementary ID25 million for defence caused the resignation of the Minister of Finance on the 22nd of October. For these reasons the new Prime Minister set up an "oil experts' committee" to study the Iraqi oil industry and to approve, or, preferably, to improve upon, the agreements initialled in 1965. It was divided approximately 5-3 in favour of ratification of those agreements but since Naji Talib, as has been said above, quite clearly sympathised with the more radical minority, its deliberations were fruitless and in December Adib al-Jadir, its most outspoken member, resigned, presumably to be free to pursue his campaign against ratification by whipping up outside pressures. The committee as such then virtually ceased to exist.

7. The result of the political and economic uncertainties which thus continued from 1965 has been a fairly stagnant market throughout 1966. In the earlier months the liberalising policies of Bazzaz created a certain optimism but the endemic lack of stability had already undermined business confidence, and when Naji Talib was appointed and it became clear that his sympathies lay more with the Nasserites than Bazzaz's had, the business community congratulated itself on its earlier prudence. Indeed private investment in industries requiring more than ID250,000 capital is officially discouraged. So it has been left to the State to undertake all really serious investment and it has various projects in hand, e.g., rayon at Hindiyah, fertiliser plant at Basra, sulphur near Shargat. The month of December saw the opening of the knitted garment factory in Kut provided by the Russians and of outdated design, while other similar Russian plants inherited from the Qasimite period are still slowly coming along. Despite all the discouragement,

however, it remains true, as I said in my review last year, that an annual injection of £135 million or more in foreign currency, as a result of oil exports, inevitably leads to some economic advance.

8. Looking forward to 1967, the political and economic uncertainties make prediction horribly difficult. The transitional period of the Interim Constitution ends in April. The present President's mandate expires about two weeks earlier. As April draws near the signs are that the period of transition will be prolonged. The army which for the purposes of politics still includes the generals who, having held ministerial posts since 1958, have had to be placed on (very generous) retired pay, is still the only really effective source of immediate power. But even the army is coming to realise that after eight years without any sort of popular sanction for its rule, it is becoming unpopular. It is in fact a bourgeois régime divorced from the people though derived in many cases from sons of poor families who through their adoption (often on their intellectual merits) into the officer class have acquired bourgeois values. (The anathematised Nuri Said, Salih Jabr and Fadhil Jamali were incidentally much the same.) The military régime would dearly like to popularise and legalise itself and, of course, its privileged position. But this is not so easy. The present President and Prime Minister have made it no easier by pursuing quite different internal policies. The President would like to abolish all political parties and create a single party system working for the good of Iraq in an Arab framework. But the single party Arab Socialist Union—now sometimes referred to as the Socialist Union, in order to placate the Kurds—is still a dead duck. It is a rather too Egyptian dead duck in any case for President Arif's taste. Naji Talib meanwhile has been busy consulting and hence encouraging the existing political groupings. Not surprisingly, like sin, these groupings—though small—have revived, proliferated and, being Iraqi, fissiparated. A "free election in which reactionary elements would be prevented from participating" (Bazzaz) would therefore be a risky affair, and would almost certainly take at least the semblance of power out of the army's hands and saddle the régime with an Assembly to which it would either have to give way, or which it would eventually have to dissolve. Neither prospect is palatable. So this transitional

period seems likely to be prolonged, and the régime which is already out of touch with popular sentiment, to stagger along to another target date set for "free elections in which reactionary elements will not be allowed to participate". It is possible it could arrange these on the basis of the personal popularity of the President and a reasonably active Prime Minister, *provided* the oil money rolls in. In the meanwhile however the various Nasserist, Baathist and Communist elements who on their own merits are unlikely to command sufficient public support to be able to claim power legitimately—the Iraqi public has had its fill of all—can be expected either separately or in conjunction to work for the forcible overthrow of the President and the present régime. A prolonged interruption of the flow of oil and the consequent loss of revenue may however create for these elements a golden opportunity, which the Soviet Government will encourage them to exploit.

9. In the foregoing paragraphs I have said little of Iraq's foreign relations. These have two aspects—your policies towards your neighbours and your neighbours' policies towards you. The latter do not necessarily depend on the former in this ideology-dominated age. Iraq has remained unaligned with a quite distinct bias in favour of the East European countries particularly the Soviet Union, if only because of the anti-imperialist bee which buzzes in the Iraqi bonnet, and which the Soviet Union or President Nasser manage to stimulate when its energies show signs of flagging. The only discernible changes in Iraqi policy lie in the tug-of-war between Iraq's Arab policies and her relations with her non-Arab neighbours—"the special circumstances" of Iraq—as the most easterly Arab State with a substantial non-Arab minority. Here in the last year there has been a change. Bazzaz at the Second Session of the Iraq/UAR Unified Political Command in February obtained President Nasser's sanction for Iraq to improve relations with all her neighbours, particularly of course Turkey and Iran. This in itself, although bearing Nasser's blessing, was enough for local Nasserists to believe in a shift of Iraqi policy away from the UAR. There seems little doubt that President Abdul Salam Arif had become disillusioned with the UAR after the Casablanca "Summit" conference of September 1965, but he was careful to

continue to pay submissive lip-service to UAR policies. His successor likewise, until the *coup* of Arif Abdul Razzaq, took a very guarded line; but since the 30th of June he has been convinced that the Egyptians, whatever they may claim, are planning his overthrow and he has presumably felt obliged—while still paying lip-service—to take defensive measures, especially by removing Nasserists from sensitive positions in the Administration and by responding in some measure to an Iranian "goodwill offensive". As has been said, this has not met with support from the Prime Minister, whose fear of and subservience to Cairo are almost total; and this has brought about a reversal of the attitudes of Iraq's neighbours. The policies of Iran and to a lesser extent Turkey have become conspicuously friendly towards President Abdul Rahman, having been hostile to President Abdul Salam. The UAR on the other hand having found another "progressive" ally in the lonely Baathists of Syria (probably after fairly strong Russian catalytic action), have had no compunction in calling Iraq to order from time to time and have made use of the Unified Political Command to exploit to their own advantage the differences between President and Prime Minister, in order to curb or to prevent President Abdul Rahman Arif's "Iraq for the Iraqis" policies. The oil crisis of December 1966 showed clearly the precarious nature of Iraqi-Syrian relations, though Naji Talib's feeling of Arab solidarity, allied to his lack of moral courage, combined to blur the true picture for the Iraqi public and indeed for the Arab world in general.

10. Relations with Great Britain still remain, in the political field, overlaid by the alleged belief in the bogey of British imperialism on the Iraqi side. But at Foreign Minister level they have been improved by the continuance in office throughout the year of Dr. Adnan Pachachi who, though he may purvey policies often as inimical to ours as those of the UAR, nevertheless has a realisation of the limits of the possible and a respect for the urbanity of diplomatic intercourse. His personal influence was not negligible in the agreement of the United Nations General Assembly to set up a mission to advise on the forthcoming independence of Aden. What is more, it gave a significant glimpse of the possibility that Iraqi policy may not necessarily be tied to that of the UAR

especially on matters which are nearer home, e.g., the Persian Gulf. On the commercial side the inhibitions are on our part. Although nine British firms of consultants are now employed on projects in Iraq and routine bilateral export-import trade flows smoothly (except for the British motor car industry (whose performance in Iraq is lamentable), Iraqi indebtedness, deriving mostly from contracts awarded prior to the revolution, still keeps away the large British engineering contracting firms and reduces, in our eyes, Iraqi credit-worthiness. The sole comment I feel able to make on this is that it is a state of affairs which does not seem to inhibit the West Germans, the French, the Italians, the Belgians, the Finns and even the Americans, let alone the countries of the Eastern bloc. Hitherto their policy has been: "The money is there (and it is over £135 million a year): let's grab it!" That too is a philosophy for earning foreign exchange.

Calendar of Events in 1966

January

- 1-3 Prime Minister, Sayyid Abdul Rahman al-Bazzaz, visited Saudi Arabia.
- 4 Her Majesty's Ambassador, together with the American, Russian and French Ambassadors, summoned to the Foreign Ministry to receive *démarche* about foreign interference on Iraq/Iran borders.
- 6 Army Day.
- 9 Demonstrations against Iranian Embassy.
- 10 Further demonstrations against Iranian Embassy, despite Minister of Interior's prohibition.
- 11 Death (in London) of Major-General Ghazi al-Daghistani.
- 12 Left-wing Baathist Ali Salih al-Saadi arrested in Beirut and asked to leave Lebanon.
- 19 Assassination in Baghdad by Kurds of former Mutasarrif of Irbil, retired Colonel Badruddin Ali Mustafa.
- 26 Four Iraq/Communist bloc "friendship societies" dissolved.

February

- 7 Prime Minister leaves for preparatory Unified Political Command talks in Cairo. Sayyid Adnan al-Pachachi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, begins visit to Turkey.
- 10-13 Visit of Tanzanian trade delegation.
- 12-19 President in Cairo for second formal Unified Political Command meeting.
- 13 Prime Minister returns from Cairo.
- 16 Iraq recognises independence of Singapore. Attempted assassination of Sheikh Muhammad Mahdi al-Khalisi, in Kadhimain.
- 22 Dr. Khalid al-Hashimi appointed president of Baghdad University.

March

- 1-22 Acting CGS, Major-General Abdul Rahman Arif, visits Morocco for independence anniversary celebrations.
- 3 Iraq/Ethiopia relations raised to Embassy level.
- 9-14 Visit of French parliamentary delegation.
- 10 Minister of State for Foreign Affairs leaves for Cairo to attend Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting.
- 13-19 Prime Minister in Cairo for Arab Prime Ministers' Conference.
- 16 Commander of the Baghdad Garrison, Brigadier Said Sulaibi, and Director-General of Police suspended from duty.
- 22 Official announcement of Major-General Shukir Mahmud Shukri's appointment as Iraqi Ambassador to London.
- 24 Commander of Baghdad Garrison reinstated.

April

- 11 Arms purchasing delegation headed by Major-General Arif, Acting CGS, leaves for Moscow.
- 11-17 Visit of Sheikh Saqr Bin Sultan, ex-Ruler of Sharjah.
- 12 President starts three-day visit to Basra.
- 13 President Abdul Salam Arif, together with Ministers of Interior and Industry, and aides, killed in helicopter crash near Basra.
- 14 Arrival of large UAR delegation to attend funeral, headed by Field-Marshal Abdul Hakim Amir.
- 15 Major-General Abdul Rahman Arif, Acting CGS, returns from Moscow. Arrival of other delegations for funeral.
- 16 Funeral of the late President. Her Majesty's Ambassador represents The Queen.
- 17 Joint session of National Defence Council and Cabinet elects Major-General Abdul Rahman Arif to succeed his brother as President.
- 18 Prime Minister al-Bazzaz submits his resignation and is asked to form a new Cabinet.
- 18 Formation of new Cabinet announced. Shukir Mahmud Shukri appointed Minister of Defence.
- 23 Prime Minister holds first "live" televised Press conference held in Iraq.
- 24 Seven prominent Kurds released from prison.

May

- 3 Resumption of military operations against the Kurds.
- 4 Major-General Hammudi Mahdi al-Fitr appointed Acting CGS.
- 11-18 Iraqi Army suffers serious setbacks in the north (Jebels Handrin and Zuzak).
- 18 Abolition of Under-Secretaryships in Ministries of Finance, Economy, Guidance and Justice.
- 20-23 Iraqi aircraft allegedly trespass on Iranian air space. Iranian protest note follows.
- 23 Major-General Nuri Jamil appointed Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.
- 23-26 Visit of Turkish Foreign Minister (Mr. Ihsan Sabri Caglayangil).
- 26- Syrian delegation of experts on Euphrates waters visits Baghdad for (unsuccessful) bilateral talks.
- 2 June Visit of Mrs. Margaret McKay, M.P.
- 2 June

June

- 4-7 Visit of the new Ruler of Kuwait, HH Sheikh Sabah al Salim Al Sabah.
- 10 Meeting of National Council in Kirkuk. Decision to end the Kurdish campaign taken.
- 19 Announcement of the appointment of Brigadier Rajab Abdul Majid as Iraqi Ambassador to London.
- 20 Closure of North Viet-Nameese trade mission in Baghdad.
- 23-27 Visit of Kurdish delegation to Baghdad.
- 29 Prime Minister announces 12-point plan for peace in the north.
- 30 Iraq/German Democratic Republic Cultural Co-operation Agreement signed.
- 30 Air Brigadier Arif Abdul Razzaq's second abortive *coup*. Razzaq and other Nasserists arrested and imprisoned.

July

- 3-5 Sir Paul Gore-Booth, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, in Baghdad.
- 3-7 Prime Minister visits Turkey.
- 17-22 Visit of Vice-President of North Korea.
- 22-24 Prime Minister, accompanied by Minister of Defence, visits Cairo for anniversary celebrations of 1952 revolution.
- 27- Prime Minister visits Soviet Union (first such official visit ever).
- 3 Aug. Publication of General Amnesty Law for those concerned with events in the north.
- 28

August

- 6 Resignation of Prime Minister al-Bazzaz. President asks Major-General Naji Talib to form a Government.
- 9 Formation of new Cabinet announced. Rajab Abdul Majid appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior.
- 16 Iraqi Air Force Captain Munir Rufa defects to Israel in a MiG-21 fighter.
- 19 Announcement of cholera epidemic in Iraq.
- 21 Naji Talib announces his programme.
- 28 Neighbouring Arab countries impose severe restrictions on travel from Iraq.

September

- 8 Dr. Abdul Aziz al-Duri reappointed president of Baghdad University.
- 14 Ali Salih al-Saadi makes abortive attempt to enter Iraq at Baghdad Airport.
- 21 Formation of National Oil Experts' Committee.
- 21-30 Visit of three-man team (including two Mrs. Dr. David Kerr and Mr. Arnold Gregory) from the British branch of "Amnesty International".
- 24 Visit of delegation from Eritrean Liberation Front.
- 25 Iraq and Syria agree to exchange Ambassadors for first time since November 1963.
- 29- Visit of Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Vladimir Semonov.
- 3 Oct.

October

- 12 Official announcement of postponement of visit of Emperor of Ethiopia.
- 14 Iraq declared free of cholera.
- 15-17 Visit of Pakistan Foreign Minister.
- 19 Restrictions on travel to most neighbouring countries removed. Iraq Foreign Minister (al-Pachachi) received by Secretary of State in London.

October

- 21 So-called "National Congress" of prominent politicians meets at the Presidential Palace.
- 22 Resignation of Finance Minister, Dr. Abdullah al-Naqshabandi, accepted.
- 23 New UAR Ambassador Sayyid Ahmad Lutfi al-Mutawalli, arrives.
- 26-31 President Arif visits the north of Iraq.
- 28 President meets Mulla Mustafa al-Barzani, near Bafestian.
- 31 Iraq/Finland relations raised to Embassy level.

November

- 4 Visit of Pakistan Minister of Industry.
- 7-8 Visit of President Nasser's special envoy, Hassan Sabri al-Kholy, ostensibly to acquaint Iraq Government of details of UAR/Syria Defence Agreement.
- 8 Mr. Geoffrey Stockwell, a Director of British Petroleum, called on Prime Minister, Sayyid Naji Talib.
- 8-10 Visit of Sir Frank Francis, Director of the British Museum, for the opening of the new Iraq Museum.
- 10-18 Visit of Sheikh Saqr bin Sultan, ex-Ruler of Sharjah.
- 13-16 Visit of Algerian Foreign Minister, M. Boufella.
- 22-23 Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry (acting Finance) visit Damascus to discuss with the Syrian Government their negotiations with IPC.

- 23- Visit of a Deputy Prime Minister of German Democratic Republic, Herr Scholz.
- 2 Dec. President Novotny of Czechoslovakia spends two hours in Baghdad in transit.
- 24 M. Jean Duroe-Danner of CFP calls on Sayyid Naji Talib.
- 26 Visit of UAR Vice-President, Zakaria Muhiddin, and delegation, for third session of Iraq/UAR Unified Political Command.
- 26-28 President Arif presided at all meetings.

December

- 3-6 President Arif visited Kuwait, accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Planning and Industry.
- 7 Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs, and CGS, visit Cairo for Arab Defence Pact meeting.
- 8 Syrian Government announced new scale of transit and terminal fees on Iraqi oil transiting Syria, and attached IPC property to that country.
- 9 Naji Talib issues statement in support of Syria *vis-à-vis* IPC and says Iraqi interests should not be affected by IPC/Syria dispute.
- 12 Pumping of Iraqi crude oil from Kirkuk to Baniyas ceased, tanks at Baniyas being full.
- 13 Pumping of Iraqi crude oil from Kirkuk to Tripoli ceased, due to alleged "mechanical defects" at pumping stations in Syria.
- 14 Dr. Ibrahim Makhos, Syrian Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister, arrived suddenly for talks on oil.
- 14-19 Visit of Iranian Foreign Minister, M. Abbas Aram.
- 15 Dr. I. Makhos left for Damascus *en route* to Paris.
- 16 M. Aram calls on Ayatullah Muhsin al-Hakim at his home in Kufa.

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December

- 16-20 Mr. C. Dalley, Managing Director of IPC and Associated Cos., in Baghdad for talks.
- 18 M. Aram and Iranian Ambassador call on President Arif after sunset.
- 22 Her Majesty's Ambassador summoned to see Sayyid Naji Talib, on oil business.

December

- 26 Her Majesty's Ambassador sees Sayyid Naji Talib, on instructions.
- 28 Mr. C. Dalley arrives for further talks on oil.
- 31 Sayyid Naji Talib's "offer" to IPC on exploitation of North Rumaila field expired.
- Mr. C. Dalley taken by Sayyid Naji Talib to discuss oil with President Arif.

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IRAQ

2 February, 1967

Section 1

IRAQ: THE POSITION OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE STATE

Sir Richard Beaumont to Mr. Brown. (Received 2 February)

SUMMARY

The Iraqi Armed Forces have since 1956 expanded enormously in numbers. In 10 years they have more than doubled. (Paragraphs 2-4.)

The 1958 revolution swept away previous restraints on expansion. Numbers, together with the quantities of modern equipment acquired, have now outstripped the facilities for efficient training and technical proficiency. (Paragraph 5.)

The officers of the armed forces, and the retired officers, have substantially improved their standard of living. The armed forces have been consuming an increasing percentage of the national Budget—to-day over 50 per cent of the revenues of the Ordinary Budget, and some of the Development Budget. This has been at the expense of agricultural and industrial development. (Paragraphs 6-8.)

The armed forces reflect the political divisions of the country and are weakened by them. (Paragraph 9.)

The armed forces enjoyed a high reputation at the time of the 1958 revolution. Now, while they still hold the physical levers of power, they no longer enjoy respect. The major problem for Iraq to-day is how to get the army out of power and how to curtail its numbers and its expenditure. (Paragraphs 10-11.)

(No. 6. Secret)

Baghdad,

Sir,

27 January, 1967.

I have the honour to enclose herein two copies of the annual report of my Defence Attaché on the state of the Iraqi Armed Forces in 1966.⁽¹⁾

2. Writing of the Roman Army in the year 193 AD Gibbon said "It has been calculated by the ablest politicians, that no State, without being soon exhausted, can maintain above the hundredth part of its members in arms and idleness. But although this relative proportion may be uniform the influence of the army over the rest of the society will vary according to the degree of its positive strength. The advantages of military science and discipline cannot be exerted, unless a proper number of soldiers are united into

one body, and actuated by one soul." It is under the rubric of the three main points made by Gibbon, namely: numbers, solidarity and its effects on society, that I would like to comment on the facts disclosed in Colonel White's compendious report.

3. In respect of numbers, the Iraqi Armed Forces have reached the danger limit laid down by Gibbon. They number 80,000 out of a population estimated at 8 million. But not only is 8 million likely to be an exaggeration for the population of Iraq; furthermore, a not inconsiderable percentage of that total has been ranged in more or less permanent dissidence against the Iraq Army over the last five years. I mean of course the inhabitants of large areas of Kurdistan. We may take it

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

SECRET

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then that the limit prescribed by Gibbon has been largely overstepped and the effects of exhaustion on the State should be apparent. This they are.

4. In the rapidity of its expansion and hence its expense the Iraq Army would delight Professor Parkinson. It must surely have outrun his laws of proliferation in Government service. When I arrived in Iraq on my last tour of duty in 1953 the army had only two divisions. The first division was based on Diwaniya and consisted mostly of soldiers from Baghdad and Southern Iraq. Its role was in the plains and it was given a certain degree of mechanised mobility. The second division was based on Kirkuk. It consisted of men from Northern Iraq and was provided with pack animals and artillery to enable it to operate in mountain country. In 1956, thanks to the fillip which the Iranian oil crisis of 1952-53 had given the Iraqi oil revenues, a third division was raised and placed under the command of the late General Ghazi al-Daghistani with headquarters at Baquba. It was an armoured division and to its cadres of officers were assigned some of the most bright and energetic of the younger military. So bright were they in fact that they became the spearhead of the 1958 revolution. After 1958 a fourth division was added based on Mosul and in 1963 there came the fifth division which took over the headquarters of the former third division in Baquba, the latter moving to the former RAF Base at Habbaniya. All these divisions now have supporting formations and in 10 years the Iraqi Armed Forces have more than doubled.

5. Under the Monarchy there had been some restraints upon the expansion of the armed forces and I can recall that the late Crown Prince Abdulillah had—rightly as it turned out—misgivings about the formation of a third division. He had lived through the Bakr Sidqi Revolt of 1936, the "Golden Square" of 1941 and the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. The 1958 revolution, sweeping away the Monarchy, also swept away these restraints with the result that, as Colonel White's report eloquently shows, the expansion of the number of officers and non-commissioned officers has been such as to outstrip the facilities for efficient training and technical proficiency. And, in fact, in May of 1966, two battalions of the Iraqi Army received a sharp defeat at Kurdish hands.

6. Weight of numbers has not been the only *incubus* which the Iraqi State has had to bear. It has also had to foot the bill for more equipment to equip more men and more expensive equipment to cater for an officer corps which considers itself the saviour of the country and the repository of revolutionary doctrine; entitled, for these reasons, to a privileged position in the State. Thus we find the Iraqi Armed Forces equipped with 114 Centurion Mk. V and 292 Soviet T-54 tanks, and the air force with some 52 MiGs and 49 Hunter aircraft, for only a portion of which, almost certainly, sufficient trained personnel is available.

7. There is also a further factor, which perhaps Gibbon did not take into account when speaking of numbers, namely: standard of living of the army. As far as the Iraqi officer is concerned, his position in a *corps d'élite*, far from imposing upon him an ascetic discipline, has led him to claim a considerably higher standard of creature comforts than were enjoyed by his counterpart of pre-revolutionary days. Many of the officers are from poor families. I may be wrong but it seems to me that the capacity of the Iraqi for *embourgeoisement* is greater than that of many other peoples. Or it may be that the stratifications of Iraq society at its lower levels were in the past so overshadowed by widespread poverty that it was difficult for an outsider to distinguish them. Be that as it may, the Iraqi officers of to-day have not only increased in numbers, they have also increased in salary and in wealth and, in particular, have helped themselves to a very high rate of retirement pay. In most countries a retired officer or official might expect 50 per cent or possibly 70 per cent of his final salary as his pension. In Iraq there are cases—the Deputy Chief of Staff (Technical) is one—where the rate of pension exceeds the final salary of the officer when on the active list. It is a fact that the pensions payable by the Iraq Government have risen from something in the region of ID1.7 million a year in 1956 to ID11 million in 1966. (This figure, it is true, includes civil pensioners but the greater part of the increased benefits goes to retired officers. Official statistics give the numbers of pensioners as follows: civil 22,000, military 24,000—double the 1958 figures.)

8. In this way the armed forces over the past years have been consuming an

increasing percentage (to-day well over 50 per cent) of the revenues of the Ordinary Budget, and also taking a sizeable percentage of the revenues of the Development Budget. Since the proportion of the oil revenue devoted to the Development Budget which before the revolution was 70 per cent has now been reduced to a theoretical 50 per cent, these depredations are a serious loss to the welfare of the public. In the year under review the Minister of Finance, Dr. Abdullah al-Naqshabandi, an orthodox financial expert, resigned when the Minister of Defence insisted on his diverting an additional ID25 million from the Development Budget to current military expenditure. In a country with many agricultural and some industrial potentialities, all requiring development, it can be seen therefore that the expense of the army bears hard on the public good.

9. While new equipment and better conditions have undoubtedly helped the morale of the Iraqi Armed Forces, it cannot be said of the army as a whole or indeed its divisional or even brigade formations that they are united in one body and actuated by one soul. *Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in dieser Brust!* Nay, many more! The political divisions of Iraqi civil life are reflected in the armed forces. I should say in fact these divisions are intensified therein. For among a large portion of the civil population the factions which have riven the Iraqi body politic over the last eight years have led to a disgust with party politics (at least as it has been manifest in Iraq); whereas in the armed forces, where the fact that political power grows out of the mouth of the cannon (105-mm. brand in tanks preferred) is immediately appreciated, political factions still flourish. Successive politico-military Governments with their concomitant purges of their opponents, by Qasim 1959 and 1960, by the Ba'ath in February 1963, by Abdul Salaam Arif in November 1963 and July 1965 have translated into civilian life, and thence into retirement or in some cases into exile, the most outstanding political figures in the Iraq Army. The Higher Command to-day is composed largely of professional soldiers whose ambitions are more personal than ideological and who for the most part are "Iraq-firsters" but in the middle and lower ranks of officer party politics—Nasserism, Ba'athism and even, in a few

cases, Communism—still have their adherents. Hence the abortive revolt of the 30th of June, 1966, by Nasserists. Hence too the growth of the habit of constant cross-posting to which Colonel White draws attention and which, as he says, militates against discipline and *esprit de corps*. The truth is that the Iraq Army is no longer dedicated and far from monolithic.

10. What is the effect of the Iraqi Army on Iraqi society? The foregoing paragraphs have *en passant* largely answered this question. The Iraqi Army of 1941, which under Rashid Ali Gailani and the "Golden Square" resisted the British re-occupation was regarded by many, especially among the young, as having in a quixotic way pointed a national aspiration. The Iraqi Army played a not inconsiderable and, considering its distance from home, a respectable role in the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine in 1948. Its firm but gentle handling of the riots of spring 1953 under the Chief of General Staff and later Prime Minister, General Nur-ed-din Mahmud, probably enhanced rather than diminished its reputation. (Many officers were decidedly unhappy at the role it then had to play and, in consequence, very little use was made of it in the riots of 1956 at the time of the Suez crisis. The police instead bore the brunt and later in 1958 paid the penalty.) In the disastrous floods of spring 1954 the army played a capital role in saving Baghdad. Thus it came to be regarded as the one patriotic, popular, disinterested and disciplined body in the State in contrast to either the phoney political grouping of the late Nuri Said—the Constitutional Party—with its landowners and large merchants, or the factions and fissiparous minority parties such as the Istiqlal (Faiq al-Samarrai and Siddiq Shanshal), the National Democratic Party (Kamil al-Chadirchi, Mohammed Hadid and Hussain Jamil). This accounts in substantial part for the popularity of the revolution of 1958. But, as I have tried to convey above, lack of ability, excess of privilege, too great a drain on public resources, corruption and factionalism have changed all that. In consequence, although it still holds the physical levers of power, it no longer enjoys respect. Civilian figures of some standing like the Foreign Minister, Adnan al-Pachachi, are blamed for co-operation in the present Government, while other civilians have

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refused time and again their co-operation and the sole civilian Prime Minister of the last eight years, Dr. Abdul Rahman al-Bazzaz, enjoys a public sympathy far beyond his merits. In brief, the armed forces are now incapable of giving a lead, let alone an example, to the country.

11. To a questioner who asked him recently: "How can you justify an Army Government in Iraq to-day?" the Prime Minister, General Naji Talib, is said to have replied: "By the fact that every family has a member in the army." In the

autumn and winter of 1958 that answer would have sounded both logical and hopeful. In the spring 1967 it has a hollow ring. For, in fact, the major problem for Iraq to-day is how to get the army out of power, to return it to its barracks and to curtail its numbers and its expenditure. If this cannot be done, or at least begun—oil or no oil—the State will indeed be exhausted.

I have, &c.

R. BEAUMONT.

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IRAQ

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Received 9th February, 1967.

MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT AID PROGRAMME TO IRAQ FOR 1966

(Sir R. Beaumont to Mr. Brown)

No.7

BAGHDAD.

7 February, 1967.

Sir,

In accordance with instructions I have the honour to report on the Ministry of Overseas Development Aid Programme to Iraq for 1966.

2. My Despatch No.5 of 28 January, 1966, to your predecessor described 1965 as mainly a year of consolidation of our technical assistance "presence" in the field of communications and stated that this provided a firm point de départ for our technical assistance effort in the coming year. Whilst there has been little difficulty in maintaining and expanding our activities in this field, achievements fell somewhat short of expectations.

3. On the credit side continuity in certain projects is beginning to show results. Mr. Murray, the hides and skins expert, completed his third tour of duty in Iraq and pronounced that things were "nae sa bad" - high praise from him - borne out by improved export prices for the Iraqi product. Two of his Iraqi assistants, both veterinarians, have been selected for training in wool grading in Bradford and it is possible that he may return for a fourth tour to carry his good work a short stage further.

4. The postal expert, Mr. Strachan, who left Baghdad in June was succeeded by Mr. Owens, a postal training officer, whose main task is to assist the Post Telephone and Telegraph Administration (P.T.T.) to implement his predecessor's recommendations by providing staff capable of doing so. He had considerable initial success in establishing a small Postal Training School, being provided with suitable premises, equipment, personnel and a counterpart with long administrative experience in the P.T.T. However, an appeal by the Ministry of Education for teachers reduced the personnel seconded to him as instructors and he is having to rebuild his training cadre. The telephone network engineer appointment, vacant since

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August, 1965, was filled by Mr. W. Trafford a former Controller of Post Telephone and Telegraph Administration, Malaya. Since his arrival, one of his main tasks has been to plan the linking of ten mobile exchanges (purchased from the General Electric Company) to the Baghdad telephone system, a problem to which neither customer nor supplier had given any previous thought. This encouraging start is being followed up with recommendations for the reorganisation of the present Baghdad system to attain full utilisation of the available equipment - a plan which might well be adopted as present financial stringency will delay the already overdue purchase of new equipment. During the year the P.T.T. civil engineer spent three months with the G.P.O. and Ministry of Works in the United Kingdom studying the civil engineering requirements of postal services.

5. Our good relations with the Directorate-General of Roads and Bridges have continued. For the third consecutive year, a senior engineer is attending the Highway Engineering course at Brighton (and a colleague is due to follow him in September). Special training attachments to study pre-stressed concrete structures and the legal aspects of contracts were arranged with British firms and institutions for officials of this department. Following the visit of the Head of the Road Research Laboratory to Iraq in 1965, two other officials visited Baghdad in 1966 - one of them to demonstrate the deflection beam technique for testing the strength of new roads and the other to investigate the possibility of holding a seminar on road construction in Baghdad at some future date. The Director-General of Roads and Bridges and the Director-General of Communications in the Ministry of Planning paid a return call on the Road Research Laboratory after the International Road Conference in London last September and also visited the Brighton College of Technology. During their stay in the United Kingdom they had discussions with the Ministry of Overseas Development, through whose good offices two senior British engineers have been

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recruited on behalf of the Iraqi Government. I am pleased to report that the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, who have given a \$23 million road loan to Iraq, have supported these appointments and recommended that the Iraq authorities should again request O.D.M. assistance to recruit two more engineers.

6. The acute shortage of qualified Iraqi personnel which is likely to become even more critical during the next two years has emphasised the importance of our two radio experts who arrived just over a year ago on secondment to the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation. Their contracts have been extended for a second year, and I would recommend continuation of both appointments at least until the move to the new Baghdad International Airport (scheduled for 1968), if not later. Not until the award to Standard Telephones and Cables of the communications contract for the new airport had been finalised were the I.C.A.O. Mission and our two experts able to bring home to the Iraqis that the factory training offered by the British firm would not produce sufficient personnel to operate the modern air traffic control system they had purchased. Consequently, encouraged by the tone of informal discussions with the then Ministry of Aviation in London, the Iraqi Directorate-General of Civil Aviation requested British technical assistance for training 47 of his staff in modern airport communications, practice and equipment. This was accepted in principle by the Civil Aviation Department of the Board of Trade and, both in numbers and importance, this scheme became our major undertaking. Whilst this is not entirely an O.D.M. project, details were marked out in co-operation with that Ministry who also accepted the subsistence charges for the Iraqi personnel. Even this scheme is unlikely to meet the requirements of the new airport, but it should at least help to avert a major crisis and provide a well trained nucleus to back up the expatriate experts whom the Iraqis will have to engage for the early years of operation.

7. As in the previous year, three police officers attended
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training courses in the United Kingdom. Though they did not achieve the high standard of their predecessors, they acquitted themselves well enough to justify our repeating this exercise. A series of attachments was arranged for the Chief Engineer of the Audio-Visual Training Centre with the British Broadcasting Corporation, and British manufacturers in studio techniques and the maintenance and use of equipment. He also attended a Thompson Television Course. This assistance complements the work of the British Council whose encouragement of this newly developing department (the recipient of a Gulbenkian grant for the purchase of television transmitters and equipment) cannot be over-estimated. At a lower level in-service training was arranged for two foremen of the Iraq Jute Industries Company with James Mackie of Belfast, who have had links with the Iraqi firm since its establishment. This successful exercise was somewhat marred by the length of time required to arrange it and by the omission, apparently for administrative reasons, of the Training Within Industry Foreman Course which had been requested to round off the training.

8. In May, Mr. A. N. Bott who had been advising the Jordan Electricity Authority, was given the task of reporting on the development of the Iraqi electrical industry with particular reference to the part which British industry may play in future expansion. This has involved the sifting of an immense amount of material, but I hope to receive his final report shortly.

9. For the third consecutive year, O.D.M. sponsored Iraqi representation at the Cambridge Conference on development. On this occasion, owing to the last-minute withdrawal of a permanent member of the Iraq Planning Board, the invitation fell to the Director-General of Technical Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sayid Munir al-Malaika, through whom all matters of technical assistance are channelled. This was a happy choice. He enjoyed what I understand was a particularly happy and successful conference and, on his return showed considerably more interest and appreciation in his work than before his departure. He also became on warmer

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CONFIDENTIAL

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personal terms with Mr. John Wood (Canadian), the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Iraq, who had been persuaded to attend by a member of my staff. This had its effects on Sayid Malaika's day-to-day relations with the U.N. Planning Staff, to our own advantage.

10. So much for the credit side of our technical assistance effort. The setbacks have reduced what otherwise might have been a very healthy balance sheet. Our response to a request, in accordance with a decision by Council of Ministers, for assistance in a computer study of the Euphrates waters have been blocked by the intransigent attitude of the Minister of Agrarian Reform, Sayid Ahmad al-Dujaili. The same Minister, plus Nasseriste que l'homme même, also overruled a decision by his predecessor and the officials concerned to accept an accountant, to teach at the F.A.O. Special Fund Institute for Co-operation and Agricultural Extension, whom O.D.M. had offered in response to a long standing Iraqi request. I have not taken up these matters with the Foreign Minister as, in present circumstances, a waiting game is preferable: most officials in the Agrarian Reform Ministry being heartily sick of their Minister. Any official approach on the subject might not only have re-bounded off the officials who have co-operated with my staff and the experts from Middle East Development Division, but closed the door on useful, but less important, offers of training in the United Kingdom for co-operative and irrigation officials.

11. Regrettably, the shortcomings have not been altogether confined to the Iraqi side. The United Kingdom Railway Advisory Services, who offered a team to carry out an Administrative Survey of the Iraqi Republican Railways, were unable to meet their commitments. However, a stores expert with considerable experience of organisation and methods has now arrived and the Railways are not dissatisfied with the reduced scale of assistance. A more unfortunate failure - not wholly attributable to the tardiness of the Iraqis' acceptance - was that of British European Airways to provide a short-term /advisory

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advisory team to assist Iraqi Airways. I have suggested that B.E.A. should write direct to Iraqi Airways explaining the circumstances which caused retraction of their earlier offer. In both cases compromise offers, whilst appreciated, could not be accepted by either department before comparison with competitive offers.

12. I am grateful for the ready response and support from Mr. Howell, the Head of the Middle East Development Division, and members of his staff whose visits to Iraq are always welcome. The continuity of the statisticians' work with the Central Bureau of Statistics has been interrupted, mainly by changes in that department and depletion of the Division's staff, but the connexion remains, is welcomed by the Iraqis, and should be re-inforced by the programme for 1967.

13. The visit to Baghdad in November of Mr. Bullock of the Middle East Department of the Ministry, who accompanied Mr. Howell on a tour of this area, provided a welcome opportunity for discussing our technical assistance programme on the ground, and achieving a closer understanding of our respective problems. I fear that the administrative requirements for placing trainees in the United Kingdom have continued to delay, if not frustrate our and Iraqi initiatives in this field, but I now have reason to hope that a primary obstacle has now been overcome. This was the reluctance of the O.D.M. to accept bona fide applications by Note Verbale from the Government of Iraq and their insistence that application forms should be signed by an Iraqi official on behalf of that Government. This is just not the Iraqi practice. Minor difficulties apart, I wish to acknowledge the response of the Ministry of Overseas Development on major issues and the generous allocation for our programme in Iraq, the nature and scale of which are about the maximum my present staff can undertake compatible with their other duties.

14. In sum, as a holding operation, our technical assistance programme helps us to maintain a presence in the face of a régime no less negative than its immediate predecessor and to

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take advantage of more favourable circumstances as they crop up. For the foreseeable future, I believe it well serves our political and commercial interests in this country; and I make no apology for its frankly pragmatic approach.

15. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Ministry of Overseas Development, Middle East Development Division, Chanceries at Amman, Ankara, Beirut, Damascus, Jedda, Khartoum, Kuwait, Teheran, the Canadian Embassy (British Interests Section) in Cairo, the Office of the Political Resident at Bahrain and to the Consulate-General at Basra.

I have etc.,

R. A. BEAUMONT.

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IRAQ

Received 9th March, 1967.

STATE VISIT OF PRESIDENT ARIF TO TURKEY:

20TH - 26TH FEBRUARY.

(Mr. Pemberton-Pigott to Mr. Brown)

No.8

ANKARA.

6 March, 1967.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that President Abdulrahman Arif of Iraq paid a state visit to Turkey from the 20th to the 26th of February. He was accompanied by a delegation of 23, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Pachachi, and the Minister of the Economy, Mr. Kazim Abdel Hamid. The visit followed the usual round of receptions, discussions and tourism. President Arif was made an honorary citizen of Ankara and later travelled to Istanbul, where he gave a press conference before departure. I enclose an English version of the joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of the visit.

2. President Arif's visit was - according to the platitude of the week - the culmination of the recent rapprochement between Turkey and Iraq.

3. In a statement to the CENTO Council of Deputies on the 1st of March the Turkish representative explained that Turkish policy was to improve bilateral relations with individual Arab countries without getting involved in inter-Arab disputes. He has said to me privately that the improved relations between Iraq and Iran have also eased the position between Iraq and Turkey. In terms of actual visits, this exchange has been somewhat one-sided: visits by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister

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(reported respectively in Miss Mackie's letter 10311/4 of the 16th of February, 1966, and Sir Denis Allen's despatch No. 27 of the 12th of July, 1966) and the President of Iraq have been reciprocated so far by one solitary visit by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs in May 1966. There is, however, a long standing invitation to Mr. Demirel, and President Sunay has now accepted an invitation to pay a return visit to Iraq at a date not yet fixed.

4. As expected, official talks concentrated on bilateral questions, especially on trade. Although Iraq's exports to Turkey (consisting almost exclusively of crude oil) have fallen slightly in the last three years (from T.L. 160 million in 1964 to T.L. 151 million in 1966) Turkey's exports to Iraq have risen noticeably from T.L. 8 million to T.L. 24 million over this period. The communiqué foresees the establishment of permanent mixed commissions on commerce and on transit trade. President Arif commented at his press conference that he hoped work would start soon on the road linking Turkey and Iraq. The reference to this in the communiqué is vague, but the Turkish Foreign Ministry say that definite plans have been made.

5. A project for Turkish technicians to examine the possibility of exploiting Iraq's gas and pipe it to Istanbul has caught the public imagination and has been the most note-worthy result of the visit. This is a Turkish initiative since they want the gas.

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I am told, however, that the dispute between Syria and the Iraq Petroleum Company (at that time unsolved) was not discussed as being an inter-Arab matter and there was no mention of the idea, once mooted, of making an alternative oil pipeline from Mosul through Turkey.

6. President Arif's inspection of the state munitions factory at Kirkkale provided another indication that Iraq was purchasing military equipment from Turkey on a commercial basis, as Sir Denis Allen suggested in his despatch No. 27. The Foreign Ministry confirm that the brief reference in the communiqué to the Euphrates waters means that there has been no progress or discussion since the Iraqi Prime Minister's visit in July 1966. Meanwhile work proceeds on the Keban Dam on the Turkish part of the Euphrates, but officials remind us that the waters will not be used for irrigation according to present plans.

7. The other bilateral problem was of course that of the Kurds. Several newspapers - and the semi-official Anatolian Agency - attached importance to the inclusion in President Arif's delegation of Major General Ibrahim Faisal al Ansari, the Commander of the Second Division stationed in the Kirkuk area, but were unsure what meaning to attach to it.

President Arif refused to discuss the Kurdish question at his press conference on the grounds that it was an internal problem of Iraq. The communiqué refers, as on previous occasions, to Turkey's interest in and support for Iraq's successful preservation of her national integrity. The Foreign Ministry told me that in fact not much time was given to the Kurdish problem in the talks. The Iraqi side expressed confidence that they could settle the rebellion

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CONFIDENTIAL

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if foreign assistance to Barzani were to stop; they also expressed appreciation for the measures that Turkey was taking on her side of the border.

8. On international topics, Turkey went no further than she usually does on the Palestine question, expressing sympathy for the refugees and demanding a solution in accordance with the United Nations resolutions. As a quid pro quo, President Arif again repeated the magic formula over Cyprus ("the legitimate rights of the two communities as guaranteed in international agreements"); and the communiqué included for the first time a reference - which may have been intended as an indirect condemnation of the Czech arms deal - to the need to observe the resolutions of the Security Council to the letter. Although neither party offered anything substantial in advance of previous communiqués, both stressed their solidarity on those points in their public speeches, to each other's obvious gratification.

9. President Arif made a good impression on officials as a moderate and intelligent if not a very powerful figure. In the press the visit attracted a moderate interest and all the publicity it received was favourable. There was a general agreement among political writers that Turkey's strategic rapprochement with the Arab world was proving most successful in the case of Iraq and that relations were better than at any time since 1958 and more solidly based than ever before. As an anti-Nasserite "progressive" who can also get along with the "traditionals", President Arif, according to the press, is Turkey's ideal bridgehead in the Arab World.

10. I am sending copies of this despatch to H.M. Ambassadors at Baghdad, Tehran, Washington, Athens, to the British High Commissioner Nicosia and the Secretary JIG Cyprus.

I have, etc.,

A.D.F. PEMBERTON-PIGOTT.

CONFIDENTIAL

Enclosure to Ankara
despatch No.8 dated
6th March, 1967.

TURKISH-IRAQI JOINT COMMUNIQUE

26 February 1967

The President of the Republic of Iraq, General Abdul Rahman Mohammed Arif, paid an official visit to Turkey between 20th - 26th February, 1967, at the invitation of the President of the Turkish Republic, Cevdet Sunay. The President of Iraq was accompanied by an official delegation which included Dr. Adnan Pachachi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kadhim Abdulhamid Al-Muheidi, Minister of Economics, and a number of senior officers and officials as well as an unofficial delegation composed of well-known personalities.

The occasion of this visit - the first that a President of the Republic of Iraq has ever paid to Turkey - served to demonstrate anew the constantly growing friendship and fraternity between the two countries.

Following the official talks, President Arif visited industrial, educational, health and cultural institutions and historical sites in Ankara, Kirikkale and Istanbul and was able to observe at close hand the successes achieved in these fields for which he expresses his appreciation.

The Iraqi President was presented with the key of the city and the title of honorary citizenship by the Ankara Municipality.

The Iraqi President, together with the delegations accompanying him, were greeted everywhere on their visits by demonstrations of friendship.

The talks between the two Heads of State in Ankara were attended on the Iraqi side by Dr. Adnan Pachachi, the Foreign Minister; Kadhim Abdulhamid Al-Muheidi, the Minister of Economics; Targi Said Fahmy, the Ambassador of Iraq in Ankara; Major General Ibrahim Faisal El-Ansari, Commander of the Second Division and Najdat Fathi Safwat, Director General of the Political Department of the Foreign Ministry.

Taking part on the Turkish side were: The Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel; the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ihsan Sabri Çağlayangil; the Minister of Commerce Sadik Tekin Mürthoğlu; the Secretary General of the Presidency Cihat Alpan; the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Zeki Kuneralp; the Ambassador of Turkey in Baghdad Ali Binkaya and other high officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the course of these talks which were held in an atmosphere of friendship, brotherhood and mutual understanding, the two Heads of State ascertained with satisfaction that there were plenty of possibilities for promoting Turkish-Iraqi relations and co-operation. The Presidents reaffirmed their joint desire for and belief in maintaining and strengthening Turkish-Iraqi brotherhood and friendship which gained its strength from the deep historical and cultural ties existing between their countries and had been showing a gratifying development.

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It was agreed by the two Heads of State that their common belief in the fact that the interests of both Turkey and Iraq were served by the harmony and solidarity of the area; their loyalty to the cause of peace and to the principles of the United Nations Charter; and the need they jointly felt for a closer co-operation to serve the interests of their two neighbour countries provided a solid basis for the growth of Turkish-Iraqi relations.

In this spirit, the Heads of State reviewed the international situation, the situation in their area and noted with satisfaction that their views were identical in regard to the promotion of Turkish-Iraqi relations. They expressed the opinion that friendship and co-operation between Turkey and Iraq served as much the interest of their two countries as that of peace and harmony in the region; noted with satisfaction that the development attained in Turkey's relations and friendship with all Arab countries served the same cause, and emphasised the positive role played by Turkish-Iraqi relations in this evolution.

The Turkish President, referring to Iraq's efforts to safeguard her national integrity and to the achievements she had attained, confirmed Turkey's interest and support in this respect.

The two Heads of State reasserted the importance they attached to the reign of peace, stability, harmony and co-operation in the area and noted their accord in wishing to contribute to it by their efforts.

President Sunay outlined Turkey's stand on Cyprus. President Arif stated the belief of the Iraqi Government that a peaceful solution based on the preservation of the independence of Cyprus and on the respect of the legitimate rights of the two communities as guaranteed by international agreements could be found. President Sunay expressed his country's gratitude for the Iraqi Government's stand in regard to the Cyprus problem. The two Heads of State agreed that the cause of peace on the Island will best be served by strict compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council with regard to refraining from actions which will increase the tension in Cyprus.

During the talks, the Iraqi President reiterated his country's position on Palestine and support for its people, a position which, he stated, was shared by the Arab people everywhere. The Turkish President, expressing his understanding, reiterated his country's sympathy with the plight of Arab Palestine Refugees and re-stated Turkey's position that a just and equitable solution to this problem can be found through the compliance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The Iraqi Head of State noted this with satisfaction.

The two Heads of State exchanged views on specific means of promoting co-operation between Turkey and Iraq. Emphasis was laid on the development of trade relations and it was agreed to make further efforts in this direction.

With this aim in view, it was considered useful that the joint commission provided for in the Turkish-Iraqi Trade

/Agreement

Agreement should be set up without delay and begin its activities; and it was also decided that a joint committee composed of Turkish and Iraqi technicians should be set up to study the transit trade between the two countries.

In view of the interest shown by the Turkish side in regard to the possibility of importing natural gas from Iraq, it was agreed that a Turkish technical mission should go to Iraq, within a month at the latest, to study the matter on the spot with the Iraqi technicians.

Stress was laid on the promotion of Tourism by means of an increase in the means of transport between the two countries on accelerating studies on providing closer opportunities of contact between the peoples of the two countries.

The Parties agreed that talks on the common waters should be started without delay.

They emphasized that they would be gratified to observe the development of their co-operation in cultural and other fields as befits of the friendship and close political relations existing between their countries.

The Iraqi Head of State invited the Turkish President Cevdet Sunay to Iraq. The invitation was accepted with gratitude.

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IRAQ
9 June, 1967
Section 1

THE ADMINISTRATION OF NAJI TALIB

Sir Richard Beaumont to Mr. Brown. (Received 9 June)

SUMMARY

1. The Administration of Naji Talib, which was not expected to survive long, would undoubtedly have come to a speedy end had it not been for the intervention of two factors from outside Iraq. (Paragraphs 1-2.)

2. The first of these was Egyptian support for Naji Talib. (Paragraph 3.)

3. The second was the oil crisis between Syria and the Iraq Petroleum Company. The solution of the original crisis after an 80-day oil stoppage led to another dispute, this time between the IPC and the Iraq Government, over the revenues for the first quarter. On the day of the solution of this latter problem Naji submitted his resignation. (Paragraphs 4-5.)

4. The insignificant achievements of the Administration in other fields. Preparations for elections started but the Interim Constitution was prolonged. The truce with the Kurds was upheld but not really implemented. Over relations with Iraq's non-Arab neighbours the Prime Minister differed with the President. Failure to combat economic stagnation. (Paragraphs 6-9.)

5. Difficulties over the succession led to the President taking on the Prime Ministership himself. (Paragraph 10.)

6. Naji Talib in retrospect. (Paragraph 11.) Defective in powers of leadership he attempted to please too many and pleased none.

(No. 13. Confidential)
Sir,

Baghdad,
2 June, 1967.

In his despatch No. 31 of the 16th of August, 1966, Mr. Bailey described the accession of retired Major-General Naji Talib to the Prime Ministership of Iraq and commented that his Government was expected to be of short duration. The betting was that weeks rather than months would be his likely tenure. In the event, Naji Talib remained in office from the 9th of August, 1966, to the 10th of May, 1967, which, by Iraqi standards, is a not inconsiderable time. In this despatch I have the honour to reflect on the reasons for this and on the achievements, such as they were, of his nine months Administration.

2. The difficult genesis of this Administration and its awaited early demise meant that scarcely had the Government been formed before the vultures began gathering expectantly. Likely candidates for the

succession, Abdul Wahab Amin, Ahmed Hassan Bakr, and others, were queuing in the wings throughout the autumn. None the less Naji Talib survived two crises in his first three months, a cholera epidemic and the resignation of his Minister of Finance over army expenditure which, despite a crisis in the Government's finances, was continuing at the same rate as before the cessation of hostilities against the Kurds. He owed his survival in the first case to the ability and hard work of his Minister of Health, Dr. Fuad Hassan Ghali, and in the second to the ambition of his Minister of Industry, Dr. Khalid al Shawi, who was prepared to step into the breach and pander to the demands of the military, by adopting more flexible financial policies than those usually followed by the Iraqi Treasury, hoping always for the best. At the same time, however, Dr. Shawi kept an escape route open by only agreeing to accept the

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Ministry of Finance in an acting capacity. But the surmounting of these two difficulties was not in itself sufficient to stave off the vultures and it seems certain that the internal pressures on President Arif to rid himself of Naji Talib would have succeeded had it not been for the intervention of two factors from abroad.

3. The first of these factors—the word intervention applies quite literally to it—was the decision of President Nasser to send Hassan Sabri al Kholi, his personal representative, to Baghdad in early November ostensibly to acquaint President Arif with details of the UAR/Syria Defence Agreement but also to impress upon him the need to retain Naji Talib as Prime Minister. This intervention was backed later the same month by the visit of the Vice-President of the United Arab Republic (UAR), Zakaria Muhieddin, and a delegation for the third session of the (UAR/Iraqi) Unified Political Command. The background to this Egyptian intervention is worth recording as it illuminates a constant factor of tension in the relations between the President and his Prime Minister. After the attempted *coup* of the 30th of June by Air Brigadier Arif Abdul Razzak and his accomplices, many of whom had been living in Cairo in exile, the President differed with Naji Talib over what should be done with the authors of the *coup*, then in prison or in exile. The President wished to see them tried by a Military Court. He even announced this publicly. Naji Talib refused, though without publicity. Although the Government of the UAR strongly (though, as is known, falsely) denied paternity of the attempted *coup d'état*, the declining prestige of the UAR Government in Iraq required them at least to be known to be doing something for those who had proclaimed themselves their friends. For this they had to rely on Naji Talib, who could at least sweep the horrid remains of the UAR involvement in this *coup* under the carpet. They were thus beholden to him and likewise fearful of any of the possible successors. They showed their gratitude by their intervention in his favour under Article 2 (iv) of the UPC Charter in November 1966 and again, according to accounts, in April 1967.

4. The second intervention from abroad was the oil dispute between Syria and the Iraq Petroleum Company. By November, the Administration's main achievement had been the implementation of restrictions on Government expenditure to meet the financial crisis caused by the continued

depredations of the army, but hardly had these begun to bite than the first rumblings of the oil crisis were heard. In early November Naji Talib had himself demanded a new deal between the Iraq Petroleum Company and the Iraq Government before the end of the year. This demand was now tacitly shelved. At the end of November he sent his Deputy, Rajab Abdul Majid, to Damascus in an attempt to prevent the Syrians taking rash action against the IPC and, by extension, Iraq itself. The Syrian Government for their part sent at about the same time a communication to the Iraqi Government promising that however their quarrel with the IPC might develop, the pumping of oil would continue. In the end, neither this promise nor the counsels of the Deputy Prime Minister availed, and on the 12th and 13th of December pumping of oil originating from the northern fields of Iraq was stopped by action of the Syrian authorities. Naji Talib was placed in what, for an Arab Nationalist, was an unenviable position. In order to ensure a resumption of pumping he had either to bow to the Left wing and nationalise the company (after which action the Syrians had promised to restore the flow—though to what markets?) or to the Right wing and support the company (imperialist as it was) against the Syrian Government with all the means at his disposal. Torn between these two extremes Naji did neither. He had in any case compromised the second of his two options at the outset by an initial declaration in favour of the Syrian action. His first move was to declare that Iraq was not a party to the dispute and should not be made to suffer. Thereafter he cast around for practical means of escape. First, he supported the Syrians expecting the company to cave in and himself to achieve an accolade for good Nationalist behaviour. No such luck! Then, unlike the happy-go-lucky Syrians, he tried to see whether, if he were to nationalise the IPC or the pipeline or at least if he were to requisition the pipeline, he could find markets for his oil. The Syrian Government and his own Nationalist friends in Iraq talked blithely of the Eastern *bloc* but serious enquiry in that quarter showed that at best it offered only a temporary and purely political solution. For, while the northern Iraq oilfields produced more than 40 million tons per year, annual requirements of individual countries of the Eastern *bloc* were of the order of 5 to 15 million tons and they were in any case inextricably tied in to the Soviet oil industry which was and is thus Iraq's

competitor. Enquiries of Spain, Japan and the Italian company ENI produced likewise no prospects for the immediate future. Perforce, Naji Talib had then to take in some measure the side of the company and on the 17th of February he went to Damascus himself where, it is said, he was rudely shocked by the intransigent attitude of the Syrian "mad wolves" and found himself wholly unsupported by his Acting Minister of Finance, Dr. Khalid al Shawi, whose evil influence still bedevils an Iraq/IPC settlement.

5. In the event, Naji Talib having got nowhere, pressure on the President from his immediate circle to replace him with a hard-liner (against the Syrians) was starting to grow again in February but, just as it came to a head, negotiations between the IPC and the Syrian Government resulted in the signature of an agreement on the 2nd of March and the resumption of the oil flow. The prospective candidates for Naji's office, who had vanished during the troubled winter months, only too glad to leave to him the unenviable task of getting out of the mess, reappeared briefly, but disappeared again when a further crisis loomed, this time between the Iraq Government and the IPC over the payment of revenues for the first quarter of 1967, for most of which no oil had been pumped from North Iraq. But if thus far the oil crisis had helped to maintain Naji Talib in power, it now contributed to his dismissal. For when it came to negotiating the payments for the first quarter, his personal suspicions of the company and his nationalistic advisers, whom the stubborn and irresistible facts of the Syrian phase of the crisis had eventually pushed into the background, came to the fore once more. He insisted in receiving a total of £40 million as of right whereas the revenue due to the Government from the export of oil during the quarter only amounted to just over £21.1 million. The IPC first offered an extra £8 million as a loan to be repaid on easy terms and eventually agreed to bring the quarter's revenues up to £35 million by an advance of some £13.9 million, of which £8 million would still be repaid on easy terms and the rest, *i.e.*, about £5.8 million, would be deducted from the Iraq Government's revenues for the rest of the year. Naji Talib refused, backed by his Acting Finance Minister and his Nationalist friends. As Acting Minister of Oil he was able to keep the negotiations firmly in his own hands and it was some time before judicious lobbying by the IPC led to his colleagues

in the Cabinet even learning of the IPC offer. At stormy meetings of the Cabinet on the 30th and 31st of March they forced him to make a *volte face*, and on the 1st of April the Foreign Minister informed me, my United States and French colleagues that the Government accepted the IPC's terms but would be glad if they could add to the advance an extra £5 million to be repaid like the £5.8 million, *i.e.*, in the course of the year. Naji Talib even then tried to re-assert himself and when himself communicating his Government's decision to the IPC some days later stuck out for terms of repayment for this extra £5 million which differed from those stated by his Foreign Minister. Slowly, however, his colleagues asserted themselves and on the 3rd of May he signed somewhat grudgingly a loan agreement for some £13.9 million (making a total payment of £35 million for the first quarter), the extra £5 million being left over for discussion later in the month.

6. The oil crisis so dominated Naji Talib's Premiership from early December onwards that there was little time for other things, and in any case the Government's achievements in other fields were not significant. In the internal field, lip-service was paid to the concept of a single-party Socialist union but despite frequent promises that vivifying action was imminent and despite the formation of a "Higher Executive Committee" and the enactment of a not particularly liberal Electoral Law, the Socialist Union of Iraq remained throughout Naji Talib's Premiership a completely lifeless organism. This, in turn, meant that a return to constitutional life (of even the most limited kind) was impossible and it fell to Naji Talib to have to extend the Interim Constitution, under which the Cabinet rules by decree, for a further year from the 10th of May and likewise to extend President Arif's mandate for a similar term. At the same time, while affecting to support the President in his desire for a one-party system which would replace the existing political groups, Naji Talib in fact encouraged the reactivation of these groups both by calling in their leaders for consultations and by a constant stream of amnesties for political prisoners and exiles (including those implicated in the plot of the 30th of June, one of the aims of which had been to kill President Arif), and of reinstatements of dismissed officials. This led notably to a re-emergence of the Ba'ath (especially the Right-wing Ba'ath) as a political force.

7. On assuming power, Naji Talib's Government had specifically endorsed the 12-point declaration of the Bazzaz Government on a Kurdish settlement but the Kurds, for their part, never liked Naji Talib or his Deputy, and his shilly-shallying over a proper initiative to implement the 12 points convinced them that he could not be trusted. His attempts to play off the Talabanist faction (old Kurdish Democratic Party Committee) against the supporters of Mulla Mustafa Barzani did nothing to allay their mistrust. Thus, the *de facto* cease-fire which existed when he took office never became more than uneasy truce. The Iraq Army remained on a war footing in the north and the necessity to continue expenditure on it added to the existing inflation which was then further aggravated by the oil crisis.

8. In the external field Naji Talib's Administration was marked by adherence to the Unified Political Command between Iraq and the UAR on the one hand and by a consolidation of links with Iraq's Muslim neighbours on the other, though the Prime Minister neither could nor would wish to claim any credit for the latter. The President made visits to Turkey, Kuwait and Iran ("all reactionaries") and was only reluctantly persuaded to visit "revolutionary" Cairo to redress the balance. As over the case of Arif Abdul Razzak, the President's policy and that of his Prime Minister were clearly at variance.

9. Although his Premiership meant nine months of stability the indecisive nature of the Government, compounded by the oil crisis, led to an almost complete stagnation of the economic life of Iraq, which had just shown signs of quickening towards the end of Bazzaz's Ministry.

10. With the signature of the loan agreement with the IPC the way was clear for a change of Government and at first the President, no doubt influenced by the man himself and the interventions of Cairo, inclined towards a reshuffle under Naji Talib, but his handling of the oil crisis (especially its latter stages) and other factors, among them Kurdish mistrust, had alienated his colleagues and, more important, the army leaders. He found it impossible to broaden the base of his Cabinet. The choice had to fall elsewhere, though in the event it proved hard to replace him. He submitted his resignation on the 3rd of May and President Arif formed a Government with himself as Prime Minister on the 10th.

11. It was Naji Talib's misfortune to succeed as Prime Minister the only civilian

Prime Minister, Dr. Abdul Rahman al Bazzaz, that Iraq has had since 1958. He was burdened with a very weak Cabinet team which he had found the greatest difficulty in putting together at all. Above all he was unfitted by temperament for high office. As a man he was not unlikeable. He was always polite in his dealings and sometimes amusing. Though not a great brain, he learnt a lot about oil in a short time. A trained staff officer, he always had pencil and pad with him in interviews. His trouble was that he was anxious to be on good terms with everyone. A revolutionary somewhat run to seed, a Shia unable to come to terms with his co-religionaries but showing that streak of masochism which is common among Shias, his principal characteristic, in contrast to Bazzaz, was a lack of public leadership and of moral courage. To a quite remarkable degree he was motivated by fear, as he frequently said in his many talks with the Managing Director of the IPC and occasionally with myself—fear of being dragged in the streets by the mob. To be fair, his physical fears were less than his moral cowardice. This led him to pander to the Syrians and to his own extremists in the oil crisis for fear of being accused of betraying the revolution, to disapprove the President's policy of friendly relations with Iran and Turkey for fear of the UAR and the Iraqi/Arab Nationalists, to refuse to help the Shias for fear of the more aggressive and influential Sunnis, and to fail to take the public into his confidence in any way for fear of arousing criticism from some quarter. His main concern was to keep the temperature down and his head on his shoulders. With a new and hesitant President not entirely devoid of either principles or courage, with the interests of the country frequently at stake, the situation called for leadership and moral courage to take positive and sometimes controversial decisions. He could not provide them. His policies were those of drift and expediency. He achieved little save a precarious nine months of stability. He was never expected to live up to his predecessor but it is a measure of Naji Talib's failure that Dr. Bazzaz's reputation, despite his decidedly limited merits and achievements, grew steadily throughout Naji Talib's tenure of office.

12. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Damascus, Beirut, Amman, Tehran, Jedda, Kuwait, Paris, The Hague and Washington and to Her Majesty's Consul-General at Basra.

I have, &c.

R. A. BEAUMONT.

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IRAQ

7 August, 1967

Section 1

THE BREAK OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH IRAQ

Sir Richard Beaumont to Mr. Brown. (Received 7 August)

SUMMARY

The Iraq Government, both emotionally and because it was frightened of the UAR propaganda machine, lent full support to Egypt's moves to remove the UNEF, to station her own troops in Sinai, to seize Sharm al Shaikh and close the Gulf of Aqaba. Popular excitement for the war was stepped up by the signing of the Jordan/UAR Mutual Defence Pact. (Paragraphs 1-4.)

2. By the time of the outbreak of hostilities the tone of the Iraqi Press had become extremely violent and was echoed by the remarks of the Soviet Ambassador in Baghdad, who gave the Iraqis to understand that the Arabs enjoyed a very large measure indeed of Soviet support. Her Majesty's Consulate-General in Basra was attacked on the 5th of June. Aref announced that Iraq was at war with Israel and that States helping Israel would be treated as enemies. The Secretary of State's statement on the 6th of June looked as though it might lead to a *détente*, a hope which was thwarted by Jordan/UAR accusations of British/American assistance to Israel. The Iraqis decided to break diplomatic relations with Her Majesty's Government and the United States Government. We were told to close the Embassy, the Consulate-General in Basra and the British Council. I and other members of the British community left for Tehran on the 10th of June. (Paragraphs 5-11.)

3. Sir Denis Wright and the staff of Her Majesty's Embassy at Tehran prepared most effective reception arrangements and the Iranian authorities were helpful in facilitating our crossing. (Paragraph 13.)

4. During the crisis there was no specifically Iraqi policy, but rather a narrow nationalistic, pan-Arab policy, reinforced by the fact that Baghdad Radio was linked permanently to Cairo Radio. The interests of the Iraqi people played no part. Neither was there any question of the Iraqis attributing Arab failures to Arab shortcomings. (Paragraph 14.)

5. The principal reason for the severance of relations was that the UAR position dominated Iraqi thinking, the "lie" was at first believed and later supported out of need for a scapegoat. That the severance was complete is probably due to extremism of the Iraqi character and Iraqi military rancour against Britain. There are already indications that realistic Iraqi public servants are being axed. The crisis has demonstrated the bankruptcy of military régimes in the Middle East. (Paragraphs 15-16.)

(Unnumbered. Confidential)

Sir, Foreign Office,
31 July, 1967.

In the following paragraphs I have the honour to record, in so far as they concern Iraq, the events of the three weeks leading up to the breaking off of relations with Her Majesty's Government by the Iraq

Government and the departure of the staff of Her Majesty's Embassy in Baghdad and Her Majesty's Consulate-General in Basra.

2. The alleged inertia of the United Arab Republic in the face of Israeli attacks on Jordan and Syria did not arouse in Iraq the criticisms and unkind jibes about sheltering

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behind the United Nations Emergency Force, which had been broadcast by Jordan Radio and had been current in the Beirut Press. This was because information media in Iraq were either under direct Government control (broadcasting and television) or indirectly controlled by the censorship exercised by the Minister of Culture and Guidance. It was also because the Iraqi President and his Government were bound to the UAR in the United Political Command and, whatever their personal feelings, were scared stiff of the UAR propaganda machine. Moreover, since August 1966, the two successive Ministers of Guidance were markedly pro-United Arab Republic in their personal inclinations as were the principal staff of the Ministry. In consequence, the publicity media in Iraq had throughout tended to build up the sincerity of the UAR's pre-occupation with the alleged dangers of an Israeli attack on Syria and they fulsomely endorsed, as the logical expression of that sincerity, the UAR's movements of troops on the 15th of May and the demand for the withdrawal of the UNEF of the 17th of May. In fact, the Iraq Government, not to be outdone in their enthusiasm for the Arab cause, placed their own forces on alert on the 18th of May.

3. On the 22nd of May the Government of the UAR, whose troops had reoccupied Sharm al Shaikh, announced that the Straits of Tiran were within UAR territorial waters and that the Gulf of Aqaba would be blocked to Israeli shipping and cargoes of strategic goods for Israel in other ships. The Iraq Government immediately and publicly supported the UAR position and the Iraq Minister of Foreign Affairs on the 24th of May called in myself and the other representatives of the countries in the Security Council of the United Nations in order to endorse the UAR's position.

4. During the whole of this period the Iraqi Press waxed increasingly violent and echoed President Nasser's calls (such as that made on the 25th of May to the Arab trade unionists) for the total annihilation of Israel. Nevertheless, the Iraqi public which since 1958 had suffered only too many interruptions in its daily life, remained as a whole unmoved, and the university and secondary schools where political agitation could have been expected, were providentially engaged in examinations

until early in June. Thus it was that a first attempt at a public demonstration on Sunday, the 28th of May, proved a fairly tame affair particularly when its organisers realised that the Embassies of the "principal protagonists" of Israel, i.e., the United States and Britain, were closed on that day. King Hussein's visit to Cairo on the 30th of May and the signature of the Jordan/UAR Mutual Defence Pact with which the Iraq Government hastened to associate itself, undoubtedly stepped up popular excitement and the feeling that a successful war against Israel was on the point of being launched. Thus, on the night of the 31st of May information was received in the Embassy from reliable sources that pro-Nasser and Left-wing Ba'ath Party factions intended to "take over" a large demonstration which the Government were authorising for the following day, in order to burn and pillage both the British and American Embassies. We accordingly took our precautions. A beginning was made in burning recent papers (the regulation "weeding" was already up to date), non-essential staff was sent home and members of the British community were warned by their wardens to keep out of the centre of Baghdad. The demonstration duly took place on the 1st of June and was on a fairly large and organised scale, including Government and industrial workers transported to central Baghdad by lorry. The police, however, kept it well under control and it did not in the event approach either the British or the American Embassies. The day was hot—in the upper 90°s. The road from Northgate to Southgate on the east bank of the Tigris was long. Moreover, it was a Thursday and the temptation to workers to knock off early and thus prolong their week-end was obviously great. The trouble-makers failed to move them. Instead, once they had reached Southgate they bathed their sore feet in the fountain, drank Coca-Cola, and dispersed. In consequence, a decision on the question of evacuation of families and non-essential personnel of the Embassy and of the British community, which had been tentatively mooted for that day, was postponed.

5. The Iraq Government as part of their war-effort had convened a meeting of Arab oil producers for the 4th of June. When it met, it decided to withhold oil supplies from any country which was deemed to be

helping Israel. Provision was made for a decision on this question to be taken collectively. However, when hostilities started this provision did not deter the Iraq Government from rushing headlong into unilateral action by ordering the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) to stop the flow of oil from both its northern and southern fields. Indeed, this decision was so precipitous that the Director-General of Oil overlooked the fact that by making so sweeping an order, he was also cutting off supplies for Iraq as well as abroad. When the Chief Representative of the IPC pointed this out to him, he was obliged to make a hasty follow-up order to permit the supply of oil to the Iraq Government's refinery at Daura.

6. By this time, the eve of the outbreak of hostilities, however provocative the speech of the Israeli Prime Minister threatening an attack on Syria might have been, the tone of the Iraqi Press which echoed that of Cairo and Damascus, and the speeches of the Iraqi President were such as to give the Israelis every reason to suppose that the Arab countries were about to attack. It is surprising that the Government of Israel, in mitigation of the accusations of aggression which have been levelled against it, has not circulated translations of these speeches and attacks. In Baghdad the tone of the Soviet Ambassador was little better than the Press. As I reported in my telegram No. 596 of the 25th of May, he encouraged Arab extremism by openly fulminating against "American-backed Israeli provocation" and he certainly gave the Iraq Government to understand that the Arab cause enjoyed a very substantial measure indeed of Soviet support.

7. On the 5th of June hostilities started. On the same morning a small crowd attacked Her Majesty's Consulate-General in Basra, burned the flag and broke windows. By mid-day President Aref had announced that Iraq was at war with Israel (the Iraq Government had in fact never signed an armistice in 1949) and that any country aiding Israel would be treated as an enemy. Baghdad airport was closed to all traffic and the railway to Turkey cut. On the 6th of June your statement of the previous day in the House of Commons declaring neutrality in the dispute looked as though it might lead to a *détente* in our steadily worsening relations with Iraq, but this was short-lived. The Jordan/UAR

accusation that British and American planes were giving air cover to the Israeli forces quickly gained widespread credence, because with effect from the previous day Baghdad Radio had been constantly linked to Cairo Radio and any pretence of an independent Iraqi stand on any question had in effect been abdicated by this one act. I immediately called on the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs to assure him that these reports were untrue. Later the same day, when the official statement contained in your Guidance telegram No. 128 had been received, I made a similar *démarche* to the President and yet another to the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs. In both cases my assurances were received in good part, especially by the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs who, though puzzled by King Hussein's association with these allegations, was nevertheless clearly inclined to believe your and the Prime Minister's denials. The President was more non-committal. Be this as it may, it did not prevent the Iraq Cabinet, of which three of the more balanced members (Tahir Yahya, Abdul Ghani Rawi and Dr. Adnan al Pachachi) were absent, from deciding to sever diplomatic relations with Her Majesty's Government and the United States Government. I was called from sleep at 1.45 a.m. local time on the 7th of June to be given this information by the Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—the acting Minister having apparently been unwilling to do so. The formal communication stated quite clearly that the rupture had taken place because the United States and Great Britain had effectively co-operated in military air operations against the Arab States and supported the Israeli enemy by affording protective air cover over its territories by the use of American and British aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean and also of bases in the vicinity of the battlefields. In handing me this communication, Mr. Nuri Jamil expressed the view that reasonable delay would be accorded to the British and American staffs to leave Iraq and that some administrative and consular personnel might be allowed to remain. He asked that we should establish contact with the Protocol Department the following day. This was done but it was clear that Protocol Department had no instructions and no views, and accordingly on the morning of the 8th the Head of Chancery called at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to propose informally arrangements which would have

necessitated the departure only of the Heads of Mission and Service Attachés of each party. This suggestion was taken in good part, but the decision clearly no longer rested with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was, we were told, to be considered by the Cabinet that evening.

8. In view of the rupture of relations the evacuation of the wives and families of British staff and members of the community was fixed for the night of the 8th. Since the airport was closed and the rail service suspended, the only way out was by road to Iran and 101 men, women and children in two buses and 19 cars left Baghdad at about 11.15 p.m. The departure of this convoy on a hot and stuffy night was a somewhat emotional affair. It involved the separation of between 40 and 50 families and, given the turbulent nature of the Iraqis, a possible risk not only for the large number of women driving their own cars in the convoy but also for the menfolk who remained behind. It was in fact nearly 24 hours of almost continuous wakefulness before many of these ladies reached Tehran, 600 miles distant. The IPC organised their own evacuation of dependants to Abadan by road.

9. The separation of the Embassy families was however to be of short duration. For not long after the convoy had left I was again called from bed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and handed a slip of paper in Arabic without heading recording a "decision" that I myself, Her Majesty's Consul in Baghdad and Her Majesty's Consul-General in Basra should leave within 48 hours and the rest of the Embassy and Consulate staffs within a week and that the Embassy and the Consulate-General in Basra should be "closed and placed under guard"—presumably by the Iraqi authorities—within the seven days. The British Council and institutes were also to be closed. In short, we were treated as enemies and at war with Iraq. I informed the Head of Protocol that there were some items in this communication which Her Majesty's Government would not accept—notably concerning the closure and placing under guard of the Embassy. I also took this last opportunity to express my thanks to him for the co-operation which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had in the past given and was still giving to Her Majesty's Embassy, and at the same time added a few somewhat terse views on the behaviour of the Iraq Government. In fact, I have

not been able to decide to what extent the decision to make this drastic break was independently arrived at by the Iraq Government. By the time it was taken the Jordanian and UAR armies were already on their knees. Even the Iraqis had suffered losses in Jordan virtually without fighting. The "lie" of Anglo-American co-operation with Israel was already beginning to wear thin. I think that certainly the younger and more nationalist members of the Iraq Government were in a sufficiently emotional state to agree to almost any measures against British interests but, in view of the formal mention of British air cover for Israel in the communication breaking relations, I suspect also that there was a feeling in the Iraq Government—probably strongly reinforced from Cairo—that an attempt must be made to make the "lie" "stick" by following it up with actions which flowed logically from its truth or at least showed that the Iraq Government believed it to be true. Accordingly, the Embassies of the United States and Great Britain were treated as though their two countries were at war with Iraq. Guards were posted on the gates and all comings and goings were checked. It was a somewhat sad and farcical game of make-believe which well illustrates the character of the Iraq Governments since the Revolution of 1958, and one which, as I have suggested in Tehran telegram No. 6 Saving of the 14th of June, may also conceal a long-standing resentment on the part of the Iraqi military régime at humiliations (real or imagined) at British hands since the ignominious failure of the Iraqi revolt of 1941 under Rashid Ali al Gailani.

10. The fact that this decision was communicated on Thursday night and that the next day, the 9th of June, was a weekly holiday, did not help with preparations for our departure. Nor did the announcement of President Nasser's resignation on the same day. For a large part of the day crowds surged up and down the road to the Presidency, which is also the road one has to take from the Chancery to the Ambassador's Residence. During the evening the crowds became denser and there was a good deal of chanting of slogans. Although these manifestations were not highly organised and did not appear to be particularly antagonistic, it was clearly wiser not to tempt providence by venturing among them. Indeed, two members of the

staff who, on the evening of the 9th, tried to approach the Chancery were given a somewhat unpleasant, though not violent, reception. The same was true the following morning when, to take leave of the staff, I was obliged to go to the Chancery by launch.

11. On that evening, the 10th of June, we left in convoy at 6 p.m. local time for the frontier. Of the Embassy staff there were my wife, myself and Her Majesty's Consul. There were 48 other members of the British community in their cars and in a bus. The Ambassadors of the Western European countries (with the significant exception of the Italian Ambassador) and of Iran kindly assembled to bid us farewell. Our convoy, escorted by armed police, reached the frontier about 10.30 p.m. It was a slow and hot journey enlivened by one trivial but, at first blush, alarming incident. At the frontier the convoy was greeted by Mr. St. John Armitage (First Secretary, Commercial), who on two occasions (on the 8th and 10th of June), despite a ban on members of the diplomatic corps leaving Baghdad, had travelled alone to the frontier and both established relations with the authorities there, which facilitated exit formalities, and set up a canteen with cold beer, hot coffee, sandwiches and biscuits for the evacuees. On both occasions (and also on the final evacuation of the Embassy staff on the 15th of June, when he preceded the main convoy) his presence and refreshments greatly relieved the discomforts of the journey, and what was more, markedly raised the morale of the evacuees. On the night of the 10th he was assisted by a representative of the United States Embassy, whom he in turn assisted later in the night, when the final evacuation of the staff of the United States Embassy took place.

12. At this point my personal experiences in Iraq cease. I can only record that from the time of my departure until that of the bulk of the Embassy staff the Iraq Government used their best endeavours to stimulate anti-British and anti-American feelings, though without very great success. There were various small, unpleasant but not very significant incidents involving both members of the staff and of the British community. During this period an enormous amount of hard work had to be got through very fast, both in the final liquidation of the political and confidential

archives of the Embassy—the Registry staff looked like chimneysweeps from the beginning of June until the day they left—and in order to make an orderly hand-over of Her Majesty's Government's properties and hirings to the representatives of the Swedish Embassy. Although we, in Baghdad, had kept our administrative affairs as rigorously up-to-date as was feasible, it is now clear to me that the dictum *memento mori* should be constantly in the minds of all Missions (as of all Heads of Missions!) in Arab countries.

13. On arrival in Iran we and the other evacuees were received by a member of the staff of the Tehran Embassy and, when we reached Tehran itself, were greeted by the most effective reception arrangements, set on foot in the Embassy compound by Her Majesty's Ambassador, his staff and more particularly by the wives of his staff. By and large each one of us was taken in by his (or her) opposite number in the Tehran Embassy and cared for until despatched either by air or overland. I am sure I am speaking for the whole of the staff from Baghdad and, indeed, for many of the British community who came with us or who found their own way to Tehran, in thanking Sir Denis Wright and his staff in accepting us so warmly and coping so well with what must have been an onerous intrusion into their daily lives and the privacy of their homes. I should also mention the fact that the Iranian authorities within their terms of reference (and often, indeed, going beyond them) did their best to facilitate and expedite the influx of some hundreds of British subjects, both in the north and in the south, many of whom, to put it mildly, were ill-documented. For example, one member of the final convoy entered Iran without a travel document, having left Iraq under a blanket at the back of a car.

14. I would like to end this already long despatch with a brief comment on the policy of the Iraq Government during this crisis. My first observation is that the interests of the people of Iraq as such—tired as they are of internal upheavals and deprived as they are by politics and incompetence from the economic and social progress to which they were entitled—played virtually no part in the Iraq Government's calculations or actions. As I have said, any possibility which still remained of presenting a specifically Iraqi view or a specifically Iraqi policy on the

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course of events was abdicated when the Baghdad broadcasting system was linked directly to Cairo mendacity and hysteria. Instead, a narrow, nationalistic pan-Arab policy was followed—and "followed" is the word, since the Iraqi leaders were clearly not in command of themselves or events—by the Government, the official media and the Press. Disbelievers, such as General Fuad Aref, the Kurdish Deputy Premier, were swept along since they could not resist the tide. Any rational approach presented by the Americans and other Western Governments was qualified as pro-Israeli and characteristically described by a senior Iraqi official as "throwing us into the arms of Russia". The idea of an independent Arab policy to be worked out and patiently executed independently with Arab means, or the idea of attributing failures of policy to their own shortcomings—always difficult in the present psychotic state of the current Arab mentality—all this went completely by the board. Wishful thinking reigned. The *Baghdad Times* was still winning victories over Israel well after the UAR had ceased fighting. It is in short impossible to speak of an Iraqi policy beyond saying that Iraqi leaders, especially the junior Ministers, probably believed quite seriously that they should and could meet and beat the Israelis in "the battle of destiny". Hence the importance of sending a token force to Egypt and the helter-skelter of getting some troops to Syria and Jordan where, arriving without their heavy armament, they could never have given a good account of themselves.

15. In respect of the rupture of relations between Iraq and Her Majesty's Government and the United States Government, the UAR's position again dominated that of the Iraq Government, the "lie" was probably believed and when belief was wearing thin was supported both from *amour-propre* and from the need for a scapegoat. The complete extent to which relations were broken—greater than in the case of either the UAR or Algeria—may represent a specifically Iraqi contribution. As I said in Tehran telegram No. 6 Saving of the 14th of June, the well-known extremism of the Iraqi character and the

rancour of the Iraqi military against Britain in particular, probably played a leading part. The present Iraqi régime, which would like to be authoritarian, has found that its dependence on a largely Anglo-American oil company and on an Anglo-American oil market, has hindered its freedom of action. So has the fact that many of its civil servants and technicians were trained in the liberal and realistic systems of Britain and the United States. They were not willing tools of a Government run by O-level officers on a diet of slogans and ruling on the basis of wishful thinking and, where necessary, the pursuit of the lie rather than the truth. Their sincere advice was therefore considered an obstacle in the way of the "blessed" Iraqi revolution. Already there are indications that once again leading civil servants are being axed to obtain a more pliant if inferior (both in mental calibre and technical ability) administrative machine.

16. In Iraq, as in the other Arab countries, the present crisis has shown up the bankruptcy of military régimes. That a military régime should have made a mess of administration, diplomacy and politics is perhaps understandable, but one would have thought they might at least have made a better showing at soldiering!

17. Finally, I would like to place on record my thanks to the staff of Her Majesty's Embassy who, throughout the period, worked long hard hours in sweltering heat and preserved a high morale and sense of solidarity. They had already been a splendid team and we were—I venture to think—a "happy Embassy". It was thus a great wrench to leave and I can say sincerely that my relief on arriving safe and sound on Iranian soil was tempered by the thought of my staff sticking it out in Baghdad for another five days and my fears that they might be less lucky than we. Fortunately those fears were not realised. I should like also to thank you, Sir, for the unfailing support of the Department during my Mission and particularly in the last difficult days.

I have, &c.

R. A. BEAUMONT.

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IRAQ

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 1967

Foreign Office.

January

- 3 Ala'uddin H. Aljubouri, Minister and Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq at the United Nations, left to take up new post as Minister at Iraqi Embassy in London.
- 5 Mr. Dalley (I.P.C.) departs for London after oil crisis talks with Iraq Government.
- 10 Mr. Dalley returns to Baghdad for further talks.
- 15 Twenty-four hour stop-over visit by Deputy P.M. of Czechoslovakia en route to India.
- 16 Iraqi Military Delegation led by Major General Hassan Sabri depart for 3 week visit to U.S.A.
- 18 - 25 Visit to Baghdad of Idris Mulla Mustafa al-Barzani.
- 19 Request for "agrément" for Talib Husain al-Shabib as Iraqi Ambassador in London withdrawn.
- 21 - 26 Sixth bi-annual session of the Iraq/UAR Economic Unity Co-operation and Integration Committee held in Baghdad.
- 26 Iraqi/Syrian bilateral talks on Euphrates waters begin.
- 27 Mr. Dalley (I.P.C.) leaves for Beirut.
- 28 Brig. Muhsin Hussain al-Habib, Iraqi Ambassador in Moscow, arrives in Baghdad for consultations.
- 28 Publication of Draft Electoral Law.

February

- 1 Officers of Iraq Armed Forces change to Egyptian-style ranks and insignia.
- 2 - 7 President Aref, accompanied by Rajab Abdul Majid and Adnan Pachachi, leave for Cairo on a five-day visit.
- 10 Iraqi Minister of Culture and Guidance, Duraid al-Damluji leaves to attend Arab Information Ministers Conference in Cairo.
- 10 - 13 Visit of Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry Fact-finding Group.
- 17 - 19 Prime Minister Naji Taleb leads delegation to Syria for oil crisis talks.
- 18 - 23 Visit of Swedish Economic Delegation.
- 20 - 26 State visit of President Aref to Turkey.

/February 22

CONFIDENTIAL

February

- 22 Announcement that Iraq is to establish Consulate General in G.D.R.
- 26 - High level Kuwaiti delegation arrives for Iraqi/
3 March Kuwait frontier talks.
- 28 M.F.A. spokesman denounces Jordanian resumption of relations with Federal Republic of Germany.
- 28 to Foreign Minister Adnan Pachachi leaves for
3 March visit to Pakistan and India.

March

- 2 Syrian/IPC Agreement - resumption of oil flow which had been held up since 13 December, 1966.
- 2 - 6 Visit of Algerian delegation for talks on Socialism in Liberated Arab Countries.
- 3 Visit of Czech Military delegation.
Visit of General Wayih al-Wadani (P.L.A.).
- 3 - 5 Visit of Kuwaiti delegation from Kum Fund for Arab Economic Development (K.F.A.E.D.).
- 5 - 9 Visit of Kuwaiti economic delegation led by Minister of Trade and Industry.
- 6 - 13 Sixth Arab Petroleum Conference held in Baghdad opened by President Aref.
- 10 - 13 Iraqi Military delegation led by Major General Shukri (Minister of Defence) visits U.A.R.
Mr. Dalley (I.P.C.) arrives.
- 11 Visit of Iranian Protocol Mission.
- 12 Publication of "Arab Petroleum and Economic Review" suspended by Minister of Culture and Guidance.
- 12 - 13 Visit of Mr. J.K. Thompson, Director of Recruitment, O.D.M.
- 13 Mr. Dalley (I.P.C.) leaves Baghdad.
- 14 - 19 State visit of President Aref to Iran.
- 16 President Nasser's A.D.C. and Secretary General of Palace arrives in Baghdad.
- 18 Prime Minister Naji Talib in his capacity as Acting Minister of Oil, ordered the formation of a new committee to study the exploitation of mineral sulphur.

/March 20

March

- 20 Kurdish delegation led by Masud Barzani visits Baghdad.
- 27 - 29 Visit of Mr. Dalley and Mr. Stockwell (I.P.C.).
- 27 - 30 Visit of Signor Fanfani, Italian Foreign Minister.
- 29 Conference of Arab Chambers of Commerce held in Baghdad.

April

- 3 Communique by Cabinet and National Defence Council announced cancellation of Resolution of 17 April 1966 which limited President's term of office to one year.
- 4 - 16 Major General Shukri, Minister of Defence, leaves for visit to India.
- 5 Lebanese Economic delegation arrives.
- 7 Iraq/Turkey protocol on natural gas signed.
- 8 Third Arab Air Transport Conference in Baghdad. Anti-cholera conference held in Baghdad.
- 9 New Iraqi/Lebanese Economic Agreement signed.
- 10 Iraqi delegation leave for Iraq/Syria Euphrates Waters talks in Damascus.
- 14 - 17 General Ali Ali Amer, C.-in-C. of U.A.R. arrives in Baghdad. Wife of 1st Secretary at Soviet Embassy, Baghdad, disappears.
- 16 Sir John Richmond arrives in Baghdad.
- 17 - 22 Visit to U.S.S.R. by Iraqi Foreign Minister, Adnan Pachachi.
- 19 Iraq/Kuwait frontier incident - Iraqis remove Kuwaiti tents.
- 20 Indian Foreign Minister passes through Baghdad.
- 24 - 30 Iraqi Foreign Minister, Adnan Pachachi, visits Hungary and Roumania.
- 24 Mr. Demirel, Turkish Prime Minister, arrives in Baghdad.
- 25 Iraqi Minister of Defence, Major-General Shukri meets Mulla M. Barzani in the north.
- 26 Iraqi Trade delegation led by Kazem Abdul Hamid Mekeida, Minister of Economy, arrived in Tehran.

/May

May

- 9 Basra Refinery project agreement covering consultant engineering services signed by Director General of Oil Planning and representatives of Kellogg International.
- 10 President announced formation of new government with himself as Prime Minister supported by four Deputy Prime Ministers.
- 20 Delegation left for exceptional meeting of the Unified Political Command in Cairo.
- 24 Cabinet agrees to send Iraqi land and air forces to the U.A.R. and Syria.

June

- 1 President ordered release of 29 detainees involved in the attempted coup of 30 June 1966. President attends "farewell ceremony" at Habbaniyah air base of Air Force Squadrons before their departure to Jordan.
- 6 Sir R. Beaumont summoned to M.F.A. and informed that diplomatic relations with the U.K. had been severed.
- 8 Sir R. Beaumont summoned by Chief of Protocol and given following communications:
 - (i) Ambassador given 48 hours to leave Iraq;
 - (ii) British Consul General in Basra and British Consul in Baghdad ordered to leave Iraq in 48 hours. Remaining members of British Embassy, Consulate General in Basra and Consulate in Baghdad to leave Iraq in 7 days;
 - (iii) Closure of the Embassy, the Consulate General in Basra and the Consulate in Baghdad to be effected within 7 days;
 - (iv) The institutes and centres of the British Council and Centres of Studies and Press Section in the Iraqi Republic shall be closed and their personnel to leave Iraq within ten days.
- 10 Sir R. Beaumont crossed Iraq frontier into Iran. Iraqi agreement to Sweden acting as Protecting Power for British interests in Iraq.
- 15 Iraqi Cabinet confirms -
 - (a) decision to break off relations with countries "which participated in aggression";
 - (b) decision to boycott all goods from America, Britain and West Germany.
- 25 The New British Club in Baghdad sealed and put under police guard without any prior written notice being served on the Club.
- 28 The British Club in Basrah closed and sealed by police.

/July

CONFIDENTIAL

July

- 10 President Aref announced formation of new government with Major General (Rtd.) Tahir Yahya as Prime Minister.
- 11 President Aref arrived in Cairo.
- 21 Iraqi Military Delegation headed by Minister of Defence left for Moscow.

August

- 6 Promulgation of Law 97 assigning to the Iraq National Oil Company (INOC) the exclusive right to develop oil and hydrocarbon substances in areas which form part of I.P.C.'s concession area under the agreement in 1925 with the Iraqi Government.
- 20 Announcement that citizens of U.A.R. and Iraq now able to travel between Cairo and Baghdad using only identity cards as official document.

September

- 8 Iraqi Press delegation left for 14-day visit to the Soviet Union as official guests.
- 21 Promulgation of Law No.123 providing for the reconstruction of the Iraq National Oil Company.
- 30 Iranian Economic delegation headed by Ali Khani, Minister of Economy arrived on 4-day visit.

October

- 9 Protocol on cultural co-operation with Soviet Union signed in Moscow.
- 15 Return of Iraqi scientific delegation from visit to China; led by Dr. Fadil al-Tai.
- 20 - 24 Visit of Mr. Demirel, Prime Minister of Turkey.
- 23 - 30 Week of Soviet films and photographic exhibition held in Baghdad to mark 50th anniversary of October Revolution.
- 31 to 5 Nov. Soviet military delegation headed by General Sidorovich, Deputy Chairman State Committee for Economic Relations.

November

- 3 Iraqi delegation led by Brigadier Khali Ibrahim, Minister of Industry, left to visit East Germany and Poland.
- 13 Resumption of diplomatic relations with Mongolia announced.

/November 29

CONFIDENTIAL

November

- 29 Visit of Soviet Economic Delegation led by Semen Skachkov, Chairman of Foreign Economic Relations Committee of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers.
- 30 to 4 Dec. Prime Minister Tahir Yahya left for visit to Cairo.

December

- 3 Promulgation of new press law placing all newspapers under the control of a newly established State organization. The Press and Printing Organisation attached to the Ministry of Culture and Guidance.
- 6 Visit to Iraq by delegation from Soviet Union of Journalists.
- 9 Iraqi-Iranian Transit Agreement signed in Baghdad.

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

IRAQ

PART 22

January to December 1968

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

IRAQ - 1968

PART 22

TABLE OF CONTENTS

No.	NAME	DATE	SUBJECT
1.	MR. LEDWIDGE	21 FEBRUARY	Visit of General Arif to France
2.	SIR HAROLD BEELEY	25 APRIL	Resumption of Relations with Iraq
3.	FOREIGN OFFICE	10 MAY	Resumption of Diplomatic Relations with Iraq
4.	MR. EVANS	31 MAY	Presentation by Her Majesty's Ambassador of His Letters of Credence to the President of the Iraqi Republic on 30 May
5.	MR. EVANS	20 JULY	The Bloodless Coup of the 17th of July
6.	MR. EVANS	27 JULY	IRAQ: First Impressions
7.	MR. EVANS	15 AUGUST	The Mini-Coup of 30 July
8.	MR. EVANS	2 NOVEMBER	Marshal Spychalski's Visit to Baghdad
9.	FOREIGN OFFICE	12 NOVEMBER	British Policy toward Iraq
10.	MR EVANS	23 NOVEMBER	The Future of Anglo-Iraqi Relations

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT INDEX

(The Figures Denote the Order in which the Papers Appear in the Volume)

ANGLO-IRAQI RELATIONS - RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS	2, 3, 4
FUTURE RELATIONS	10
BRITISH POLICY	9
ECONOMY	10
EDUCATION	10
FIRST IMPRESSIONS - MR EVANS'	6
INTERNAL AFFAIRS - BLOODLESS COUP	5
MINI COUP	7
PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS - HER MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR'S	4
VISITS - GENERAL ARIF'S TO FRANCE	1
MARSHAL SPYCHALSKI'S TO IRAQ	8

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Paris as an unqualified success, we must assume that it was only part of the story. I believe that General de Gaulle will also have reasoned with Arif in favour of an overall settlement in the Middle East along the lines which the former indeed publicly advocated in his speech in Arif's presence at the State banquet on the 8th of February—Israeli withdrawal and Israeli assistance in a just solution of the refugee problem, balanced against Arab recognition of Israel and freedom of navigation for Israeli ships in the Suez Canal and through the Gulf of Aqaba, with the United Nations impartially responsible for the security of established frontiers. We are told that the General readily conceded to his guest the need for Israel to give up what she had seized by force of arms in June last year; but that he also dwelt in private upon the advantages of coming to terms with Israel, and the necessity for a lasting peace that would enable Iraq to concentrate on economic development and the strengthening of national unity and her independence *vis-à-vis* the outside world.

4. The French do not have the impression that they made any headway whatsoever with the Iraqis in the matter of Israel. Indeed, the obduracy of Arif's position was illustrated most plainly in the lengthy Franco-Iraqi wrangle over the final joint communiqué. The first draft prepared by the Quai d'Orsay, while calling for Israeli withdrawal, also spoke of the need for a general settlement which would enjoy the "free consent of all the States concerned". At the outset of the State visit, the Iraqis had (unsuccessfully) petitioned General de Gaulle to delete mention of the State of Israel from his banquet speech, of which Arif was apparently shown an advance copy; they adamantly refused (this time with success) to permit even an indirect reference to that State in the joint communiqué. Drafts and redrafts succeeded each other throughout the last evening of the visit and the final version, approved by M. Couve de Murville just before midnight, amounted to French capitulation. The text, while paying lip-service to the Security Council's resolution of the 22nd of November, 1967, departs from the deliberate ambiguity of that resolution by stating that no settlement would be possible without prior Israeli withdrawal. As regards the other items in General de Gaulle's package, the communiqué expresses the hope that

every effort would be made, notably in the United Nations context, to secure a just and equitable settlement which would establish lasting peace, but is silent concerning recognition of Israel or on the principle of freedom of navigation. The Elysée and the Quai d'Orsay privately assured us that this does not mean that there has been any change in basic French policy; M. Couve de Murville has since said the same to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly. But at least one official has had the grace to admit that the French were professionally "not particularly proud" of the outcome.

5. Nor was much immediate progress made on matters of purely bilateral interest between Iraq and France. There had been some prior speculation in the Press that, during the visit, the two Governments would reach agreement that French arms should be supplied to Iraq and that a French company would be given the right to exploit the North Rumaila oilfield. In the event, arms and oil were discussed only in general terms.

6. The French seem to assume that the Iraqi Government will order Mirage aircraft sooner or later; but it was left as a result of the visit that the Iraqis (who do not seem to be quite so keen to buy as the French to sell) would continue discussions with the manufacturers and the military experts. According to one Press report, the Iraqis caused some embarrassment by insisting that, if they acquired Mirages, they would require not merely training facilities for their pilots in France, but also the permanent services of French maintenance technicians in Iraq.

7. As regards North Rumaila, the French had no doubt originally hoped that final agreement between the Compagnie Française de Pétrole (CFP) and the Iraq National Oil Company might be announced during President Arif's visit. But it had become clear by the preceding week that this also would not be possible. A separate agreement had, however, just been signed in Baghdad under which the Entreprise de Recherches et d'Activités Pétrolières (ERAP) would explore certain geologically promising areas of Iraq. The French Government were therefore able to express the general hope that the latter agreement would shortly lead to the conclusion of the former. Nevertheless, we understand that, as over arms, so also with oil, the Iraqis are

proving extremely tough negotiators. Thus General Arif himself made it clear in a Press interview given in Paris that various international companies were interested in North Rumaila and that, while Franco-Iraqi friendship was an element which would be taken fully into account by his Government, the results of the negotiations with CFP would also depend on the conditions which the latter was able to offer.

8. Notwithstanding the above, we are told that the personal impression left by General Arif was not unfavourable. General de Gaulle must have been disappointed that no real political dialogue or give and take proved possible with his guest; he is also said to have sensed that Arif had not brought with him to Paris any very great political authority, whether within Iraq or among Arabs generally. However, the Quai d'Orsay came to respect, perhaps unwillingly, Arif's tough attitude and bargaining skill, depicted perhaps unfairly in the French Press as being that of a "carpet merchant". The French also took consolation from the fact that Arif and his suite listened politely and carefully to all that General de Gaulle had to say, even to what was least palatable to them. One informant at the Elysée has told us, with a note of approval, that the French side deduced that the Iraqi position was closer to that of President Nasser than they had previously supposed.

9. On the other hand, the French Press, where they were not openly critical, were distinctly unenthusiastic throughout the visit. The contortionist apologetics of Gaullist publicists did not prevent most newspapers from interpreting the final communiqué as a sell-out to the Arabs at Israeli expense. Pro-Zionist sympathies were indeed in public evidence from an early stage. Thus the Mayor of Nice, where General Arif touched down on arrival in France, refused to take part in the ceremony of welcome on the grounds that Nice was a twin city of Tel Aviv. And General Arif himself presented the pro-Israeli lobby with a gift when, in the course of an official luncheon at the "Hotel de Ville" in Paris, he launched into an extravagant denunciation of "cowardly Zionist aggression" and of the "Zionist propaganda" which had been unmasked by "the noble French people under the leadership of General de Gaulle". The arrest of four Kurds in the course of a rather feeble pro-Kurdish

demonstration outside in the street served only to add to the consequent outcry in the French Press. The Socialist city councillors who had declined the invitation to be present at the Hotel de Ville luncheon were quick to express their indignation at the "incredible statement" uttered by General Arif. Even the Gaullist party newspaper *La Nation* felt obliged to carry an article questioning whether Arif's words had not exceeded the norms of propriety to be expected from a distinguished foreign guest.

10. Given the opportunism and even hypocrisy on the part of both sides with which the occasion was surrounded, General Arif's visit inevitably struck a slightly false note in France, and senior officials have to their credit revealed a certain embarrassment in private in response to the cynicism manifested by the Press and public opinion. Moreover, perhaps because the French Government had slightly overplayed the publicity build-up before the visit took place, the immediate and tangible dividends of the visit for France have seemed modest. There is no doubt, however, that General Arif personally was flattered by the attentions he received and by the lavish appointments which surrounded him. Given that the dates for the visit had been officially fixed only three weeks beforehand, this was a tribute not only to the organisers but also to the determination of French Ministers that things should go with a swing. We must therefore reckon, whether as a gesture of friendship towards the Arab world or as an important step towards enjoyment of Iraq's dowry of natural resources, that the State visit of General Arif will fulfil at least some of the hopes with which, in Paris, it was from the outset invested.

11. For General de Gaulle personally, there was perhaps also a deep satisfaction of a more immediate nature. Beginning his speech at the State banquet with a survey of historical reasons why relations between Iraq and France had not, until recently, been as close as he would have wished them, the French President recalled, among other explanations, that "doubtless Iraq, once established as a State after the First World War, found herself placed under foreign influences which held her at a distance from France". The General has always resented what he regards as traditional British hostility to French influence in the Middle

East, culminating in the role which the British played in the events leading up to the French withdrawal from Syria and the Lebanon in 1946. No doubt now, in his own eyes, he has set the tables turning.

12. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors in Amman, Ankara, Cairo, Kuwait, Tehran, Tel Aviv, and Washington and to Her Majesty's Representative at UKMIS New York.

I have, &c.

W. B. J. LEDWIDGE.

ANNEX

COMMUNIQUÉ FRANCO-IRAKIEN

Paris, 10 Février 1968

Sur l'invitation du Général de Gaulle, Président de la République Française, LL. EE. Le Général Abdul Rhamam Mohamed Aref, Président de la République Irakienne, et Madame Aref ont été, du 7 au 10 février 1968, les hôtes de la France. Le Président de la République Irakienne était accompagné de LL. EE. MM. Ismail Khairallah, Ministre d'Etat chargé des Affaires de la Présidence et Ministre des Affaires Etrangères par interim, Abd Al Sattar Ali Hussein, Ministre du Pétrole, le Général Faicid Sharhan Al Irs, Ministre d'Etat, le Dr. Mohamed Badi Cherif, Chef des Bureaux de la Présidence de la République, Kazem Khalaf, Sous-Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires Etrangères, et Mustapha Kamel Yassine, Ambassadeur, représentent l'Irak auprès de l'Office Européen des Nations Unies.

Aux entretiens que le Président Aref et le Général de Gaulle ont eus au cours de ce séjour ont été associés la délégation irakienne et M. Nacer Omari, Ambassadeur d'Irak à Paris, et d'autre part M. Georges Pompidou, Premier Ministre de la République Française, M. Couve de Murville, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, M. Michel Debré, Ministre de l'Economie et des Finances, M. Olivier Guichard, Ministre de l'Industrie, et M. Pierre Gorce, Ambassadeur de France à Bagdad.

Cette visite, qui s'est déroulée dans une atmosphère de grande cordialité, a contribué à resserrer les liens de toute sorte qui unissent les deux pays.

Les deux Chefs d'Etat se sont entretenus, dans un esprit de compréhension, de la

situation politique internationale et des problèmes qui se posent à l'heure actuelle, notamment pour le Moyen-Orient, enfin des rapports entre l'Irak et la France.

Les conversations ont porté naturellement en premier lieu sur la situation qui résulte du conflit israélo-arabe et les positions prises à cet égard par les deux Gouvernements. Les deux parties ont, à ce propos, rappelé la Résolution adoptée le 22 novembre par le Conseil de Sécurité; elles sont d'accord pour estimer qu'il ne saurait y avoir de possibilité de règlement sans évacuation préalable de tous les territoires occupés depuis le déclenchement du conflit. L'espoir a été exprimé de part et d'autre que les efforts de tous pourront être conjugués, notamment dans le cadre des Nations-Unies, en vue de parvenir à un règlement juste et équitable et susceptible d'établir une paix durable dans la région.

Le Général de Gaulle et le Général Aref ont accordé une grande attention au développement de la coopération entre la France et l'Irak. Ils se sont félicités des résultats déjà obtenus. Ils sont convenus de rechercher les moyens d'élargir cette coopération et de l'étendre à tous les domaines où les intérêts des deux pays sont complémentaires.

Les deux Chefs d'Etat ont examiné les divers aspects des relations économiques franco-irakiennes, notamment dans le domaine pétrolier: ils ont constaté leur commun désir de favoriser le recours à des formes modernes et mutuellement avantageuses pour la mise en valeur des ressources pétrolières. Le Général de Gaulle a marqué l'intérêt avec lequel la France suivait l'exécution du plan de développement irakien, qui vise à la meilleure et à la plus large utilisation des ressources naturelles de l'Irak ainsi qu'au développement de son équipement industriel. Le Gouvernement français formule le vœu que la participation déjà prise par des entreprises françaises à la réalisation de ce programme constitue le point de départ d'une coopération économique aussi large que possible.

Le Général de Gaulle et le Général Aref ont examiné également les problèmes posés dans le domaine militaire et se sont trouvés d'accord pour estimer qu'il s'agit avant tout pour l'Irak d'affirmer son indépendance et de contribuer au maintien de la paix.

Il a été entendu enfin que tous les efforts devraient être faits pour développer les

rapports franco-irakiens dans le domaine culturel et technique. Des accords de coopération culturelle et de coopération technique, prévoyant la mise à la disposition de l'Irak de professeurs et d'experts français dans les disciplines les plus diverses sont en discussion et seront prochainement signés.

Les deux présidents sont convenus que des consultations fréquentes auraient lieu entre Paris et Bagdad sur les questions d'intérêt commun.

Le Général de Gaulle et le Général Aref se sont déclarés très satisfaits d'une visite qui a marqué l'importance attachée de part et d'autre aux rapports entre les peuples français et arabe, ainsi qu'au développement des relations amicales et constructives entre l'Irak et la France.

Le Général Aref a invité le Général de Gaulle à se rendre en visite officielle en Irak. Le Général de Gaulle a accueilli cette invitation avec plaisir et l'a acceptée en principe.

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2

IRAQ
RECEIVED 29 APRIL 1968

RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH IRAQ

(SIR HAROLD BEELEY TO MR STEWART)

CAIRO
25 APRIL 1968

Sir,

I have the honour to submit a brief account of my recent visit to Baghdad in connection with the resumption of diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and Iraq. The visit was little more than a formality, designed to satisfy the amour-propre of the Government of Iraq, since it had already been agreed that it would be followed after a brief interval by the resumption of relations.

2. I arrived on the evening of the 19th of April and was met at the airport by officials of the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the Swedish Ambassador, Mr. Odhner. On the following morning I called on Mr Ismail Khairallah, Minister of State for Presidential Affairs and Acting Foreign Minister. He talked in general terms about Iraq's foreign policy and the prospects for cooperation between the two Governments, making the point that what he described as a modification in the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the problem of Arab-Israel relations had facilitated the decision of his Government to resume diplomatic relations. I explained your wishes as to the procedure for resuming relations, including the information that the Ambassador who had been designated for Baghdad would not be able to arrive earlier than the middle of

/June.

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June. Mr Khairallah was disappointed by the prospect of so long a delay; he explained to me at a later meeting that he had been empowered to agree to the exchange of Ambassadors at an early date but had not been authorised at that time to reach any agreement about interim arrangements between the resumption of relations and the exchange of Ambassadors. I said that I would telegraph his view to you and ask for further instructions. I could not expect to receive these before the 23rd of April and we therefore agreed to meet again on the morning of that day. The Minister asked if I would like to meet some of his colleagues in the Government. I said that I was content to conduct the negotiations with him, but if he thought it would be useful for me to see the Prime Minister or any other members of the Government I was of course entirely at their disposal. He did not respond to the suggestion that I should see the Prime Minister, and it was eventually agreed that he would arrange appointments for me to call on the Ministers of Oil, Economy and Education.

3. I made this round of calls, accompanied by a member of the Protocol Department, on the morning of the 21st of April. The Minister for Oil, Mr Abdul Sattar Ali al-Husain, occupied almost the whole of the half hour we spent together in complaining about the attitude of the United Kingdom to the problem of Israel and about the behaviour of the Iraq Petroleum Company. Among other things, he said that some British newspapers had gloated over the bombing of Arab civilians by the Israeli forces, remarked that in Britain we had numerous societies for protecting the rights of animals and drew the conclusion that we considered Arabs to be inferior to animals. As for the oil companies, he said that the Government of Iraq was still ready to make a final settlement of all outstanding issues, but that if the Company persisted in refusing to accept this offer the Government

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/of Iraq

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of Iraq would know how to protect the rights of the people. Perhaps fortunately, I did not have time to make more than a very general reply to these unconstructive statements.

4. I then went to see the Minister of Economy, Dr. Abdul Karim Kanuna, with whom the conversation was of an entirely different character. I found it impossible to induce Dr. Kanuna to talk about current problems at all, beyond a passing confirmation that discrimination against British trade would be lifted as soon as diplomatic relations were restored. He preferred, having given me an excellent cigar, to reminisce about the friends he had made in the British Embassy over the past twenty years, and to express his delight at the prospect of resuming relations. I went from his office to that of the Minister of Education, Dr. Taha al-Haj Elias, who impressed me as a serious and thoughtful administrator and who commented in relation to the Arab-Israel problem that what he feared most was that events would drive the Arabs closer to what he described as "the other side." He said they had had experience of Communist influence in Iraq in the years immediately following the revolution of 1958 and they had no desire to repeat it. We spoke briefly on cultural relations between the two countries and the problems of Iraqi students in the United Kingdom, his only specific criticism being that there was difficulty in getting enough places in British institutions of higher education for engineering students. He hoped the British Council would help him to resolve this problem.

5. Swedish telegraphic communications appear to be less rapid than our own and although I had not arranged to meet Mr. Khairallah until noon on the 23rd of April your instructions were not put into my hands until ten minutes before I had to leave the hotel

/to keep

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to keep this appointment. I was therefore not able either to hand the written request for agrément to the Minister at this meeting or to prepare a text of the joint communiqué announcing the resumption of relations. When we met we therefore had to work on an Iraqi draft of the latter. There was however some advantage in my inability to re-quest the agrément in writing since it obliged me to ask for a second interview with the Minister in the afternoon and he told me that he would use the interval to speak to the Prime Minister and confirm with him that the arrangements we had made were acceptable to the Government of Iraq. A few final details were agreed at the second meeting in the afternoon, when I also obtained Mr. Khairallah's confirmation that trade discrimination would cease on the resumption of relations. Our discussions were amicable throughout, and although I was disappointed on arriving in Baghdad to find that the Under-Secretary of the Ministry, Mr. Khallaf, had left for the United Nations Conference on Human Rights in Tehran, it was perhaps an advantage that the negotiation was not complicated by what I understand to be an uneasy relationship between the Minister and the Under-Secretary.

6. I cannot conclude this brief account without expressing appreciation, which I have conveyed by letter to Ambassador Odhner and orally to my Swedish colleague here, for the help given to me by the Swedish Embassy throughout my visit.

Mr. Odhner was obliged on the day after my arrival to join a Swedish delegation who were visiting Kuwait and did not return to Baghdad while I was there. His Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Johnson, however, could not have been more cooperative and I am most grateful for his help. He and his Swedish colleagues were somewhat disconcerted by a mysterious incident on the morning after my arrival, when a pistol shot was fired through the window of a room in the British Embassy occupied by a member of

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the Swedish staff. The shot, if fired deliberately, did not appear to have been aimed at the spot where the official would normally have been sitting but it was deflected by a bar of the window frame and would in fact have struck him if he had been at his desk. The incident was at once reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a police inquiry was immediately instituted. Additional guards were also posted round the Embassy.

7. I was entertained both by Ambassador Odhner and by Mr. Johnson, who also arranged a cocktail party at which I was able to meet the leading members of the British community in Baghdad. No entertainment was offered by the Iraqis (except privately by Mr. Dhia Jafar, who will be remembered as one of the closest associates of Nuri Pasha before the revolution). I was however the guest of the Government in the Baghdad Hotel. I was seen off at the airport on the morning of the 24th of April by the Swedish Chargé d'Affaires, by representatives of the Protocol Department and also by the head of the Arab Department of the Ministry, who in the absence of the Under-Secretary had been present at my three conversations with Mr. Khairallah.

I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Stockholm, Beirut and Kuwait.

I have etc.

Harold Beeley

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IRAQ

3

RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH IRAQ

(MR STEWART TO SIR HAROLD BEELEY)

FOREIGN OFFICE

10 MAY, 1968

Sir,

I was glad to read in Your Excellency's Despatch (3/8) of the 25th of April your account of your successful visit to Baghdad from the 19th to the 24th of April, which resulted in the resumption of diplomatic relations with Iraq.

2. I am grateful to you for making this visit and for your conduct of the preliminary negotiations with the Iraq Ambassador in Cairo in the course of the first three months of this year. It was perhaps a little surprising that the Iraq Government should in the event have attached so much importance to an early exchange of Ambassadors, since on their previous record we had been concerned with the probability that there would be procrastination about the arrival of an Iraqi Ambassador in London. This may yet occur. So far we have had no reply to our request for agreement for Her Majesty's Ambassador-designate, nor have we had any nomination from the Iraq Government of their proposed Ambassador in London. It is nevertheless gratifying that formal diplomatic relations have now been resumed from the 1st of May.

3. I was glad to learn that the Swedish Embassy in Baghdad had been so helpful and that you had expressed your thanks to them

/suitably.

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suitably. Her Majesty's Ambassador in Stockholm will be formally thanking the Swedish Government for everything they have done for us in Iraq in protecting British interests there since June, 1967. The disconcerting incident of the pistol shot reported in paragraph 6 of your despatch, is an indication that the task has been no sinecure.

4. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors in Stockholm, Beirut and Kuwait.

I have etc

for the Secretary of State

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IRAQ
20 June, 1968
Section 1

**PRESENTATION BY HER MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR OF HIS LETTERS
OF CREDENCE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE IRAQI REPUBLIC
ON 30 MAY**

Mr. Evans to Mr. Stewart. (Received 20 June)

SUMMARY

1. Description of the ceremony. (Paragraphs 1-3.)
2. In his speech the Ambassador stressed the importance of mutual respect and equality forming the basis of the future relationship between Britain and Iraq. (Paragraph 4.)
3. In his reply the President welcomed the sentiments expressed by the Ambassador and asked that his good wishes should be conveyed to The Queen and Her Majesty's Government for the prosperity of the British people. The President then recapitulated the main points in Anglo-Arab relations since the First World War and implied that we might take a leaf out of the French book in our attempt to improve our relations with the Arabs. (Paragraphs 5-7.)
4. The Ambassador's impression that the President and his entourage are convinced of the advantages of the resumption of diplomatic relations and that a new page in Anglo-Iraqi relations can now be turned. We should spare no effort to encourage and strengthen by the readiness and moderation of our response the position of elements favourable to us. (Paragraphs 8-10.)

(Confidential)
Sir,

Baghdad,
31 May, 1968.

As reported in my telegram No. 14 of the 30th of May, I yesterday presented to His Excellency the President of the Iraqi Republic the Letters accrediting me as Her Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Baghdad. Diplomatic relations, which were severed in June 1967 and which were formally renewed on the 1st of May this year, have thus been re-established on an Ambassadorial level.

2. Following the usual procedure, the Head of the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on me at my Residence and accompanied me in a Presidential Rolls-Royce to the Palace. My Counsellor, Mr. McKearney, accompanied by an official from the Protocol Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, followed in the second car, incidentally also of British manufacture, a Bentley, and the remaining

members of my senior staff travelled in other cars put at our disposal by the Iraqi authorities. The motor cycle escort were also mounted on British Matchless machines. The cortège was thus a truly British one.

3. On arrival at the Palace, I was saluted by a section of the Presidential Guard and met by an official of the Protocol Department of the Presidency and by an ADC. After a brief interval spent in the Ambassadors' waiting room, where I was met by the Acting Head of the Protocol Department of the Presidency (the substantive post is at present vacant), I was introduced into the presence of President Arif. In attendance on His Excellency were the Minister of State for Presidential Affairs and Acting Foreign Minister, the Chief of Cabinet at the Presidency and the senior ADC.

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4. In the customary speech which I made before handing over my Letters of Credence, I expressed, of course, my pleasure both at finding myself in Iraq—a country I had not previously visited during my 30 years of service in the Middle East—and at being called upon to contribute to the rebuilding of the bridge, temporarily broken, between our two peoples. In addition to expressing these sentiments which, however, genuinely felt, might be thought to reflect little more than common courtesy, I sought to make two points of substance. First, I stressed that we were living in a rapidly changing world and that our future relations, based on mutual respect and equality, must necessarily take this into account. Secondly, I suggested that mutual trust and confidence were essential if a fruitful relationship was to be established. I followed up these general points, which I thought were well taken and which were duly reported in to-day's Baghdad Press (the daily *Al Jumhuriya* marked the occasion by publishing a full page open letter addressed to me), by expressing my belief that our countries could collaborate to their mutual benefit in the economic, cultural and even political fields. I referred to the contribution made by British technology and industry in the economic development of Iraq and by the British Council in the cultural and educational fields, stressing that both industry and the Council were ready to play their part again. I concluded with the usual expression of good wishes.

5. In his reply President Arif was so good as to extend to me a warm welcome to Iraq and to formulate good wishes for the success of my Mission. He professed pleasure at the sentiments expressed in my speech and said he hoped that fruitful co-operation would indeed come about. Perhaps inevitably he implied that British policy makers were responsible for the mistrust which the Arabs felt for us. He concluded by asking me to convey to The Queen his good wishes for Her Majesty's health and happiness and also to Her Majesty's Government for the prosperity of the British people.

6. After I had presented members of my staff, His Excellency invited me to the customary private audience. This was, of course, the most interesting part of the ceremony. The President spoke of the need for mutual confidence and, taking

up my point about the regard which individual Iraqis and Britons felt for each other (which he readily recognised), said that friendship between individuals was not enough and that friendship between peoples was essential. I permitted myself to ask how this could be achieved. Inevitably this provoked historical retrospection and His Excellency said that in spite of the fact that the Arabs had co-operated loyally with the British against the Turks, their co-religionists, during the First World War, Her Majesty's Government had first partitioned the Arab world between themselves and the French and secondly admitted Zionism to the heart of Arabia. This had to be put right. For obvious reasons I refrained from carping comment but suggested that in spite of mistakes on both sides (he did not demur) a great deal had been achieved. The independence of the Arab world—the withdrawal of British forces from the Gulf would shortly be completed—was a reality and Arab unity, which was a genuinely felt Arab aspiration and which Her Majesty's Government had done much to foster, was in spite of difficulties waxing in strength. My reference to the Gulf produced, as I had hoped, a positive reaction. The President agreed that some form of unity of the Gulf States was the best guarantee against trouble in the area. But he stressed that Iraq favoured the unity of all the Arab States in the Gulf, from Oman to its head. I stressed that the form of unity was for the States themselves to decide, but that such unity would have the blessing and encouragement of Her Majesty's Government.

7. At this juncture President Arif made the point that recent changes in French Middle East policy had dramatically improved France's standing in the area. (It may be recalled that the Syrian Prime Minister, Dr. Za'ayin, had on more than one occasion spoken to me in a similar vein when I was Her Majesty's Ambassador in Damascus before the break of diplomatic relations last year, adding indeed that were they able to adopt such a policy Her Majesty's Government would be better placed than France to reap the advantages in terms of friendship with the Arab world.) I refrained from reminding His Excellency that it was French, not British, manufactured planes that had destroyed the Arab Air Forces during the hostilities last year, but shall not show such delicacy when a suitable occasion presents itself in the future.

8. On the conclusion of the audience with the President, I was able to have some further talk with the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and also with the Chief of Cabinet at the Presidency, Dr. Sharif. The latter was Cultural Attaché in London in the late 1950s and I was impressed by his friendly attitude and apparent sincerity.

9. I have no doubt that the President and the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs were at pains to make themselves agreeable. Both were happy in the course of our talk to mingle English and Arabic and I was pleasantly surprised that both were able to understand and speak the former language reasonably well. President Arif, who struck me as a gentle and affable person, recalled with pleasure his short stay in London in 1964 and I expressed the hope that he would be able to visit the United Kingdom again in the not too distant future.

10. I formed the impression that the President and his entourage, including the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, are convinced of the advantages of the resumption of diplomatic relations and feel that a new page in Anglo-Iraqi relations can now be turned. This is also the view of the Swedish Ambassador, who has been in charge of our interests during the past year and who believes that many Iraqis feel that

they have been pushed against their will and inclination into the arms of the Russians and their allies. Unfortunately it is more than likely that suspicion of our motives, if not positive hostility, persists in some quarters, particularly in military and security circles (expanding perhaps the difficulties which we have experienced in connection with the arrival of one proposed member of my staff and with individual British subjects). Although allowance must be made for the euphoria attending on the resumption of diplomatic relations, I have no doubt, however, that we should spare no effort to encourage and strengthen by the readiness and moderation of our response the position of elements favourable to us. Only in this way can unfriendly elements be disarmed; it is perhaps too much to hope that their suspicion or hostility can be removed. If a new relationship can be achieved (and for this speed as well as circumspection is necessary) the rewards in the economic, cultural and even political fields could be considerable.

11. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Ankara, Beirut, Tehran, Kuwait and the Political Resident, Persian Gulf.

I have, &c.

T. E. EVANS.

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IRAQ
25 July, 1968
Section 1

5

THE BLOODLESS COUP OF THE 17th OF JULY

Mr. Trefor Evans to Mr. Stewart. (Received 25 July)

SUMMARY

Explosions in neighbourhood of the Presidential Palace were followed by announcements on Baghdad Radio that a Revolutionary Council had taken over. A curfew was declared. It soon became apparent that the *coup* was organised by the moderate wing of the Baathist Socialist Party and a group of young officers in the Presidential Guard and in Military Intelligence. The situation quickly returned to normal. (Paragraphs 1-6.)

2. The composition of the new Government reflects the two groups responsible for the *coup* but includes capable technicians in Ministries on which economic reconstruction depends. (Paragraph 7.)

3. The dismissal of President Arif. (Paragraph 8.)

4. The new régime's statement of policy is on the whole moderate. It promises increased production, particularly in the agricultural field, a return to democratic and parliamentary life, conciliation in the North (Kurdistan), support for Palestine (and, unfortunately, for Commando action), an apparently moderate oil policy, non-alignment, support for the United Nations and respect for treaties. There is no mention of the USSR in the policy statement and there may be indirect criticism of the UAR. Perhaps a policy of "Iraq for the Iraqis" is evolving. Some elements are well disposed to the United Kingdom, e.g., General Takriti. The new régime may look to the United Kingdom for military training and equipment and we should lose no time in appointing a Defence Attaché. (Paragraphs 9-11.)

(Confidential)
Sir,

Baghdad,
20 July, 1968.

As reported in my unnumbered telegram of the 17th of July, loud explosions, which seemed to originate in the centre of the city, were heard in the Baghdad area at about 4.15 a.m. on the 17th of July and were generally assumed to herald violent political change. Shortly afterwards the assumption was confirmed by announcements on Baghdad Radio to the effect that a Revolutionary Command Council with full powers had been established, that President Arif had been deposed and exiled and that the Government of Tahir Yehya had been overthrown. The revolution was, it was claimed, a bloodless one. Three MiG fighter aircraft, which according

to Baghdad Radio belonged to the revolutionary forces, made low-level flights over the capital.

2. Thus Iraq, which three days earlier, on the 14th of July, had been celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the 1958 Revolution in the course of which King Faisal I, the Regent, Prince Abdul Illah and the Prime Minister, Nuri Said Pasha, were put to death, witnessed its fourth *coup d'état* in a decade.

3. In a series of communiqués issued during the morning of the 17th of July, the Revolutionary Command Council announced that a curfew had been imposed, that frontiers and airports had been closed and that Government offices would not be

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open to the public. It was also announced that the Chief of Staff, the Commander of the Air Force and the Commander of the Third Division had been put on pension. At the same time every effort was made to keep essential public services operating and appeals were broadcast to those engaged in this work to report for duty. Rather touching was the appeal to workers in the ice factories to go to work so that their fellow countrymen would not suffer unduly during a revolution that was taking place when the thermometer was showing over 100° fahrenheit.

4. Senior members of my staff and I myself, who reside in the western suburbs of Al-Mansour, some 4 miles to the west of the city centre and the Chancery—the old Residence which was situated in the Chancery compound and which was destroyed during the 1958 Revolution has not so far been rebuilt—were able to meet and to consider the situation. In the course of the morning some members of the staff, including a member of the Diplomatic Wireless Service, were able, in spite of the curfew, to proceed to the Chancery and establish contact with your Department.

5. The first communiqué, announcing the takeover of power by the Revolutionary Council, included a carefully-prepared statement of policy. So far the movement had been nameless and faceless—even at the time of writing the names of the members of the Revolutionary Command Council have not been announced—but people acquainted with the local political scene had little difficulty in recognising the voice of the man who read the statement of policy as that of Saleh Mahdi Ammash, the well-known leader of the moderate wing of the Baath Socialist Party who had been Minister of the Interior during the short-lived Baathist/Nationalist Government of General Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr in 1963. It was no surprise, therefore, that before the day was out it was announced that the Revolutionary Command Council had elected General Bakr, a member of the Council, to be President of the Republic, and General Hardan Al-Tikriti, also a well-known Baathist, as Chief of the General Staff.

6. Signs were not lacking that the situation was being brought quickly under control. As is usual on these occasions, telegrams of support from units of the

armed forces and organisations of all kinds were received at revolutionary headquarters and dutifully broadcast by Baghdad Radio and television stations. It was announced that on the following day the hours of curfew would be shortened (dawn to dusk), that business in Government and other offices would be as usual and that airports and frontiers would be opened. Armed civilians, belonging to the Baathist National Guard, who had made a brief appearance and had caused some alarm but who had in fact behaved correctly, were withdrawn.

7. Delay in the announcement of the name of the Prime Minister and members of his Government inevitably gave rise to speculation and to surmise that there were differences of opinion within the ranks of the revolutionary leaders. This may well have been the case—the Government when announced late on the 18th of July was clearly by no means monolithic, although the strong cement of common interest and political aspirations can be assumed to bind them together, at least for some time. Appointed Prime Minister was the young Lieutenant-Colonel Abdul Razzak al-Nayef, until recently Deputy Director of Military Intelligence and still in his thirties. His colleagues included, as expected, representatives of the moderate wing of the Baath Party, including Saleh Mehdi Ammash in the key post of Minister of the Interior. On the other hand, the equally, if not more, important post of Minister of Defence was entrusted, like the Premiership, to a relatively junior officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Ibrahim Abdul Rahman al-Dawood. Encouraging is the fact that Ministries essential to economic reconstruction were entrusted to experts, some of them well tried—the Ministry of Finance to Dr. Salih Kubba, until recently Governor of the National Bank, that of Oil to Dr. Mehdi Hantoush, a non-political Professor of Engineering, and the Ministry of Agrarian Reform to the former Minister of Communications who had previously worked in several capacities in the Ministry of Agrarian Reform. Foreign Affairs are to be in the hands of an experienced career diplomat.

8. It is still too early to attempt to record in any detail the dramatic events which took place in the early hours of the 17th of July. One thing, however, is apparent and that is that the Baath Socialist Party was not alone responsible for what took place and that

the Baathists were aided and abetted, and possibly even stage-managed, by a group of young officers in the Presidential Guard and in Military Intelligence whose political tendencies are still not clearly discernible. As far as can be ascertained, a delegation, nominally at least headed by General Bakr and presumably with Lieutenant-Colonels Nayef and Dawood in attendance, presented themselves after midnight at the Presidential Palace and demanded either the replacement of Prime Minister Tahir Yehya (the reconstruction of the Government or even the appointment of a new one had been under consideration for some weeks) or more likely the President's own resignation. It is unlikely that President Arif hesitated for long—he is essentially a gentle character seeking to avoid trouble at any cost—and it is believed that he agreed to leave the country and join his family in London. The explosions heard at about 4.15 a.m. originated from guns in tanks belonging to the Presidential Guard and fired before it was clear that resistance was uncalled for. There are reports that one man lost his life.

9. This is perhaps a convenient point at which to consider briefly the statement of policy which was included in the Revolutionary Command Council's communiqué No. 1. Carefully drafted, it is on the whole a moderate and reasonably conceived document. It seeks to explain the revolutionary movement of the 17th of July in terms of the corruption of the Arif II régime, and its failure to make any progress in the Kurdish problem, the Palestinian question, the Constitutional issue and the country's economy. It must be admitted that these strictures are not far from the mark. The Governments of General Arif were remarkable for their efforts to seek peaceful solutions—Kurdistan, Turkey, Iran, the Gulf, even oil and, in the last resort, perhaps Palestine—but they were equally remarkable for their ineffectiveness, not least in the economic and particularly in the agricultural field. The Revolutionary Council promised in its policy statement an early solution to the Kurdish problem within the framework of national unity and apparently in a spirit of reconciliation, a return to democratic life within the framework of "popular organisations" (the Baath Party?) and with a view to creating a National Assembly, a strengthening of Agrarian

Reform in the cause of greater productivity, an oil policy independent of the international oil companies and involving the strengthening of the Iraq National Oil Company, the development of both public and private sectors of the economy and a general increase in productivity with a view to lessening dependence on oil revenues. In the field of Arab policy, loyalty to the Arab League, to Arab unity in the political, economic and military fields and to the cause of Palestine (with full support for the Arab Commandos) was proclaimed. As regards foreign affairs, non-alignment and the need to relate Iraq's relations with foreign Powers to the latter's attitude of support or lack of support for Arab questions, particularly that of Palestine, were restated. More generally, there was support for the United Nations Charter and respect for international agreements. Finally, the Revolutionary Command Council gave an assurance of its intention to establish the closest relations with Arab, Islamic and friendly countries.

10. All this is unexceptional and, indeed, laudable—the only really disturbing element is the support promised to the Palestine Commando effort, which seems likely, sooner rather than later, to give further trouble. Noteworthy is the fact that the USSR is not singled out for praise for its support of Arab causes, nor even Gaullist France, both of which the weak Arif régime was obliged, largely for internal political reasons, to cosset. Nor does the UAR fare any better. The suggestion in the policy statement that responsibility for the 1967 Palestine fiasco should be investigated probably reflects disillusionment felt in the Iraqi Armed Forces at the Egyptian High Command. (Colonel Nayef, before he became Prime Minister, when he was still a Deputy Director of Military Intelligence, told a member of my staff who happened to call on him, that he admired President Nasser for his experience in international affairs but did not conceal his belief that the Egyptians were responsible for last year's *débacle*.) Unfortunately, there is probably little comfort for Washington—the repeated references to Imperialism in the context of Palestine hardly suggest that the new régime is likely to be any better disposed to the United States than the old. In the economic field, particularly in agriculture, emphasis on the need for increased productivity is obviously healthy.

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As regards oil, it is at least encouraging that the proclaimed desire to strengthen the National Oil Company and the independent oil sector, is not accompanied by threats of action against the concessionary company. Finally some hope, albeit faint, is held out of progress on the Kurdish front.

11. It remains to be seen how far these fair hopes can be realised. The change has not, it must be admitted, been particularly well received by the general public, whose memories of the Baathist excesses of 1963 are still vivid. There seems, however, to be some chance that a policy of "Iraq for the Iraqis", with emphasis in the Arab field on greater independence from the UAR and on economic recovery at home, is developing. The slightly religious, Islamic flavour attaching to the régime smacks of anti-Communism. As regards Anglo-Iraqi relations, the new establishment contains some elements that are well-disposed, for example, General Hardan Al-Tikriti, the new Chief of Staff. It is perhaps a good sign that Iraq's new rulers made no difficulty about ex-President Arif proceeding to London to join his wife, who had been there for some weeks on a private visit. (I suspect that my French colleague, who has been basking in the reflected glory of President Arif's official visit to Paris in

the spring, is not too pleased either with President Arif's presence in London or, even more, with his disappearance from the local scene.) We must of course watch developments and in particular be on the look-out for any fissiparous tendencies. But if there are any signs that the new régime wants to turn to us for, for example, military training, provision of military equipment, etc., we should not, I submit, delay unduly. The prompt appointment of Service Attachés might be the first step. All this is necessarily tentative. Others will, however, be only too ready to jump on the band-wagon. If the wagon proves to be reasonably reliable, let us not miss the opportunity. One thing is certain, the new rulers of Iraq are no less likely than their predecessors to need help and none is better placed to furnish it than Her Majesty's Government.

12. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Amman, Ankara, Beirut, Cairo, Jedda, Kuwait, Tehran, Tel Aviv and Washington, to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, and the United Kingdom Mission, New York.

I have, &c.

T. E. EVANS.

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EQ 1/18

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IRAQ
1 August, 1968
Section 1

IRAQ: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Mr. Evans to Mr. Stewart. (Received 1 August)

SUMMARY

The resumption of diplomatic relations with Britain was generally welcomed in Iraq and progress has been made towards restoring our relations to normal. The reasons for the Iraqis' willingness to see us return. (Paragraphs 1-3.)

2. President Arif's régime was unpopular and had virtually no support outside the armed services. Corruption was widespread and the middle class were dissatisfied. Although the Government was weak and beset by intrigue, the Civil Service and the armed forces provided a certain stability. (Paragraphs 4-6.)

3. The Government which resulted from the *coup d'état* of the 17th of July seems likely to be more nationalist than its predecessor and to be less dependent on the UAR and less sympathetic towards the Communist countries. Its cohesion will depend largely on the ability of its members to make concessions to one another and to co-operate. Its chances of survival will be improved if, as is possible, economic activity increases. (Paragraphs 7-8.)

4. Her Majesty's Government should be ready to help Iraq by meeting requests for military supplies and training, by encouraging the British Council to resume its valuable work and by providing experts to help with the country's development. Her Majesty's Government should give our exporters every assistance to sell in this relatively rich market. Exchanges of visits by Ministers, Members of Parliament, officers and officials are of great importance in promoting good relations between Iraq and the United Kingdom. (Paragraphs 9-11.)

(Confidential)
Sir,

Baghdad,
27 July, 1968.

It might be thought premature to record first impressions of a country like Iraq less than two months after one's arrival at the post, especially as new personalities and to some extent new policies have emerged following the bloodless *coup d'état* of the 17th of July. On the other hand, if we are to make up the time lost during the period of 11 months when the United Kingdom and Iraq were not in diplomatic relations, an early review is necessary in order that the appropriate decisions can be taken without delay.

2. My first impression, and it is with pleasure that I record it, is that the reappearance of the British on the Iraqi scene has been generally welcomed, even, as far as can be judged, by the general public. I myself have, as I have already reported, been well received by Ministers, officials and senior officers of the Iraqi Armed Forces. Since my arrival there has been no repetition of the demonstration, organised by the Communists, which took place on the 29th of April as a protest against the resumption of diplomatic relations, and the anniversary of the Israel attack of the 5th of June last year was marked by no

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untoward incidents as far as we were concerned. Steps have been taken by the Iraqi authorities to bring about a return to normalcy—in particular, restrictions on trade with the United Kingdom have been lifted and British institutions, in particular the British Council, will, it is confidently hoped, be able to function normally very soon. Inevitably, there are elements which, either out of political conviction, particularly as regards the Palestine question (see below), or from vested interest, would prefer to see us out of the way. But these appear to be under control.

3. It is probable that a number of considerations combined to convince the Iraqi Government under ex-President Arif that it was in their interests to resume diplomatic relations with Her Majesty's Government, and it may contribute to an understanding of the present situation of the country to examine these briefly. Firstly, the Government probably sought, in a small way, to reduce its own unpopularity, particularly with the educated and propertied classes. The latter, who for up to half a century have looked to the United Kingdom for creature and other comforts (education of their children, medical care of all ages, business advantage and a host of acquired needs), were more or less seriously inconvenienced as a result of the break in diplomatic relations and the consequent delays in securing visas for the United Kingdom. It is perhaps significant that the wife of the then President of the Republic should, almost immediately relations were restored, have decided to visit London and incidentally to take up residence in the Iraqi Embassy. (This caused, so it would seem, the *célibataire*, or, more accurately, *divorcé* Ambassador, to absent himself from the capital) and, of course, it was to London that ex-President Arif himself repaired after he had been deposed by the revolutionaries in the early hours of the 17th of July. More seriously, the re-establishment of relations served, and was intended to serve, to reassure the middle classes that the régime was anxious to establish at least a balance between East and West. This, I think, appealed particularly to many officers in the armed forces who, in spite of the equipment received from the Soviet *bloc* and in consequence a good deal of training received in the same quarter, have retained the British command structure and training methods (the latter at second-hand from India and Pakistan). In

commercial, industrial and official circles where connections with the United Kingdom and a knowledge of the English language are widespread, our reappearance was greeted as a sign of the adoption by the régime of wiser counsels. Even at a more modest level, that of the ordinary man, the worker in the factory and the workshop or in the bazaar, the image of the "Ingles" was, in spite of a genuine distrust of Her Majesty's Government's policy in regard to Palestine, that of a just man and was therefore welcomed. This is not to say that in certain circles, working-class as well as intellectual, where the grim realities of life in the Middle East, Communist propaganda and frustrated ambition have their effect, the reappearance of the "Imperialist" was not considered a setback.

4. This might be a convenient point to consider in greater detail the nature of the Arif régime. It was, of course, an undisguised military establishment, a variant of the military-dominated Governments which succeeded each other after the abolition of the monarchy in July 1958. The heavy hand of the security police was, however, less heavy and obvious than might be expected—in fact freedom of expression at least in private conversation was refreshingly marked. Unlike the military régime in Egypt, which at least at certain stages of its existence could boast of genuine popular support, the régime of ex-President Arif was, however, unpopular and had virtually no support outside the armed services. The masses, whose standard of living is often abysmally low, had little for which to be grateful to their rulers. Prices and taxes are high, particularly as a result of the stringency measures adopted after the Palestine war, and the oil crisis when the Syrian Government closed the IPC pipeline; unemployment and under-employment are widespread; industrialisation, in spite of a number of large-scale projects, some of which have been successful, has not seriously changed the Iraqi way of life; the decline in agriculture, particularly as a result of half-baked agrarian reform, has accelerated the drift to the towns, where in spite of some laudable housing projects completed since the Revolution in 1958, the problems of urban over-crowding have been increased. Agitators, Communist and others, are not lacking. Furthermore, a third of the population, the virile and capable Kurds from the mountains of the

north, were disappointed in their hopes of at last gaining their rightful place in the State. The Shias, though less is perhaps heard nowadays of their grievances, are still dissatisfied with the essentially Sunni Government—in this respect the post-Revolutionary Governments in no way differ from those prior to 1958—and the activities of dissident pro-Communist groups organised in Ché Guevara fashion give rise to some concern. But most serious was the failure of the régime to come to terms with middle class civilians—professional men and intellectuals (most of whom have strong political affiliations), the leaders of political parties and the leaders of commerce and industry. The economy is, of course, a "mixed" one, with public, private and mixed sectors, and a limited number of individuals, particularly those acting for foreign concerns, have done very well. Indeed, if one is to judge by, *inter alia*, the standard of private housing in the Baghdad suburbs and no doubt in other large urban centres, the middle class, not only officers of the armed services, but also Civil Servants and professional men, live very well. Unfortunately, to maintain these standards, public servants who have no private means—not a few of them have and it is surprising how many representatives of the old families are still in key positions—have to augment their modest salaries by accepting gifts from licence seekers and others. In short, corruption was and is widespread. Material well-being is, however, not enough for the middle class Iraqi, who is very much a political animal, and who considers that he is at least entitled at some point in his life to be a Cabinet Minister. He took hard his exclusion from politics except by favour of and on the terms of the military. Efforts were made during the time of ex-President Arif, as they were indeed during the whole revolutionary period, *i.e.* since 1958, to include representatives of the political parties, varying from the Socialist Baath to Right-wing Nationalist who sheltered under the Nasserite umbrella, but were largely unsuccessful. The result was that the civilian members of the last Tahir Yehya Government, though some of them were vaguely representative of political tendencies, were by and large technocrats—Civil Servants and university men who by reason of their short tenure of office and generally inferior standing in relation to their military colleagues, felt frustrated and discouraged.

5. Unfortunately, the unpopularity of the régime was only matched by its inherent weakness. The three years which elapsed since ex-President Abdul Rahman Arif took over on the death of his brother were marred by two attempted *coups d'état* (organised by ostensibly Nationalist and pro-Nasserite elements) and repeated Cabinet changes. The Government of Tahir Yehya, which at the time of the *coup* had been in office for a year, in its last days displayed its weakness by its inability to replace three Ministers who had resigned and its disappearance, with that of President Arif himself, came as no great surprise. Beneath the surface, however, a certain stability which permitted a number of major development works to go ahead, existed, due to the strength of the armed forces and to a lesser extent, as in the France of the Fourth Republic, to the Civil Service. Much good material particularly at the Director-General level, exists in the country. Ministers and even Prime Ministers came and went, but a certain level of business was maintained. Furthermore, and this is perhaps remarkable for a military régime, Governments under ex-President Arif on the whole sought peaceful solutions and appeared anxious to avoid adventures. If the régime failed to implement the arrangements reached with the Kurds two years previously, it at least avoided a resumption of hostilities; it seemed disposed to welcome peaceful development in the Persian Gulf area after the withdrawal of British forces and, as far as can be judged, would have been prepared to follow the Egyptian lead for some *modus vivendi* in Palestine. It made considerable efforts, not perhaps reciprocated, to improve its relations with its eastern neighbour, Iran, and maintain friendly relations with Turkey. Its mildness, which perhaps reflected the character of the President himself, and to a lesser extent of the foxv Tahir Yehya, was inevitably interpreted as an indication of a negative policy or even of a lack of policy. Certainly the régime had little public image. More serious was the amount of time wasted in placating individuals and in futile political manoeuvring, time that could have been profitably devoted to the elaboration of a positive policy, *e.g.*, the rehabilitation of agriculture; reform of the Civil Service and in preparing the way for a return to parliamentary life. (The proposals submitted in the last days of the Government

for consideration by public opinion and involving an appointed legislative council as a first step to an elected body did not perhaps receive the attention and consideration they deserved.)

6. In these circumstances, it was no small wonder that change came and that it came the way it did, by the hand of the military in the early hours of the 17th of July. (Action by the masses would only have been possible if the forces of law and order had lost control, and there were no indications of this, although in longer term, if the situation had continued to deteriorate, it could not be excluded.) As reported in my despatch No. 1/3 of the 20th of July, it was precisely the corruption of the Arif régime and its failure to make progress in economic, constitutional, Kurdish and Palestine problems that, according to its authors, were causes of the revolution. The problems, however, remain, and only men have changed. What are the prospects of improved performance? Hope of progress has been held out and, as far as can be judged at this stage, the new men propose to proceed on reasonable lines. As has happened so often in similar circumstances, it is the nettle of corruption that has been first grasped—26 prominent people have had their assets frozen and some have been detained. But apart from the fact that the list includes some unexpected names, such as that of the President of the University and of the President of the Federation of Trade Unions, doubts as to the effectiveness of these measures may be permitted. Other problems are even more intractable. It would seem, however, that the approach, as seen from the point of view of British interests, and involving a more independent "Iraq for the Iraqis" line and less dependence on the UAR and less cossetting of the USSR and the Communist bloc, is promising. Certainly the change has caused considerable concern among the Communist bloc representatives in Baghdad, who were far from happy with even the Arif régime, and also the representative of Gaullist France. Naturally, the UAR Embassy is for the moment observing discreet silence. Not lacking indeed were those who said that recent events were to be attributed to the recently reopened British Embassy or at least to the IPC—they seemed to find it significant that the assets of the Minister of Oil and of the Chairman of the Iraqi

National Oil Company had been blocked. Finally, there were those who saw in it the hand of the CIA and prophesied that in due course diplomatic relations would be re-established between Iraq and the United States.

7. With the passage of time, however, a reversion to old Iraqi ways can be expected. Already, in his Press conference, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, whose pro-Western sympathies cannot be doubted, felt obliged to make good certain notable omissions in the Revolutionary Council's statement of policy, namely, a bow to the Soviet Union and even France, as friends of the Arabs, and to the UAR as the big brother. He seems to have gone out of his way to say that accusations of corruption against those responsible for the country's oil affairs had nothing to do with the contract recently signed between INOC and the French Government-owned ERAP. To some extent this can perhaps be attributed to habit and to the desire to be all things to all men. There was also some prompting by both the Russians and the French. Like their predecessors, they are exposed to the temptation to seek popularity the easy way and they apparently do not feel strong enough to say openly what they feel about the recently re-established relations with Britain. Britain, it seems, is still something of a dirty word. On the other hand, the Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed what could only be surmised from the statement of policy, namely that there was no reason why relations between the Government and the IPC should not be improved. Indeed, though these are early days, the probability is that the régime will be as anxious as that of ex-President Arif and may well be better placed to develop relations with the United Kingdom. Certainly there are elements, for example General Takriti, the new Chief of Staff, who are aware of the value to Iraq of the British connection.

8. But, as suggested above, these are early days. The régime is not monolithic and the possibility of discord between military and civilians, and between the generals and the colonels who made the *coup* cannot be excluded. But the views of the moderate Baath representatives in the Government are moderate enough and those of the "Iraqi Nationalist" officer clique, liberal and pan-Arab enough to make co-operation possible. As always, success or failure will depend on the

personalities involved, on their readiness to make mutual concessions, and to hang together or to hang separately. The history of the past 10 years has shown that the armed forces cannot, without an adequate political base, rule the country and that without army support no political party can do so either. What is discouraging is that experience so far suggests that even both together can only succeed for the briefest spell. It is to be hoped for the sake of Iraq and what Iraq can contribute to the stability of the area that this régime will be the exception. Perhaps ex-President Arif and his Governments were unlucky. The oil crisis in the spring of 1967 and the Palestine war that followed in the summer led to crippling restrictions in the economic field. These have been, and will probably continue to be, relaxed. A minor economic boom, particularly in view of the good 1968 harvest and the resultant exportable surpluses of grain, is not impossible. Obviously, nothing would get the Bakr era off to a better start than increased buoyancy in the economy which would have its effect on the vocal world of the small trader and shopkeeper.

9. It remains, on the assumption that a measure of success will attend the efforts of the present Government, to consider with due circumspection and caution what should be Her Majesty's Government's policy. It might be argued that after what happened last year and indeed during the past 10 years, a policy of reticence and *festina lente* is called for. But this overlooks the emotional character of the Arab to whom the friendly gesture, as the Russians were quick to learn, means much. Not only among the Latins does *bis dat qui cito dat* hold good. Even under the hesitant Arif régime, the High Command lost no time in making it clear that they hoped that training in the United Kingdom could begin again and pressed for the early appointment of Defence Attachés. If, as is possible, Iraq's new military leaders repeat the request, we should not, I submit, hesitate to appoint Attachés quickly, within weeks rather than months. But it is not only in the military field that prompt action is called for. A few days before the *coup d'état* I was informed unofficially by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the British Council was free to reopen its doors—unfortunately the change of régime came before confirmation in writing could be obtained. But if, as I expect, confirmation

is forthcoming, I trust that no time will be lost before a representative of the British Council comes to Baghdad to prepare the way for the opening of a centre. More direct assistance might conceivably be made available in connection with a reform of the Civil Service which appears to be overdue. Too large a proportion of the country's resources go to paying the swollen number of public servants and pensioners and some pruning, together possibly with some increase in salaries, is called for. I recall that in the '50s Sir Paul Sinker, then a Secretary in the Treasury and later Chairman of the Civil Service Commission and Director-General of the British Council was made available to the Egyptian Government to advise on the reform of the Civil Service. Perhaps an opportunity will arise to help the Iraqis in a similar way?

10. In the commercial field, self-interest of the least imaginative kind dictates that every effort should be made to regain our place in this important, and potentially very important, market where £175 million a year in oil revenue is available to the economy and potentially great agricultural wealth is waiting to be developed. A useful lead in might, of course, be technical aid for development projects, e.g., agricultural co-operatives, irrigation, drainage and flood control schemes, etc.

11. But it is perhaps in the human field that the greatest effort is called for. The new rulers of Iraq need help and encouragement as much as did their predecessors. They know, although they would perhaps not admit, that no one is better placed to give them help than Her Majesty's Government and I have little doubt that it would be a help to them to be told that such assistance in a discreet form was theirs for the asking or even without the asking. I have for long attached importance to the exchange of visits between British and Arab Ministers, senior officials, officers of the armed forces and Members of Parliament. The "wastage" on the Arab side, sometimes, but not always, regrettable, though great, does not detract from the importance of such exchanges; what counts is that they should be seen to be made not in the interests of individuals or even of a particular régime, but in the interests of the country. President de Gaulle was quick to understand this. In the case of Iraq in the present stage of its development, this is

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important and I trust that when opportunities come—and they may come soon—they will not be missed. Let it not be said that the only Arab President who was made welcome in London was an ex-President.

I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Amman,

Ankara, Beirut, Cairo, Jedda, Kuwait, Tehran, Tel Aviv and Washington, to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, and the United Kingdom Mission, New York.

I have, &c.

T. E. EVANS.

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IRAQ
22 August, 1968
Section 1

THE MINI-COUP OF 30 JULY

Mr. Evans to Mr. Stewart. (Received 22 August)

SUMMARY

On the 30th of July the leaders of the Right-wing Ba'ath forced out the Nationalist officers with whose help they had brought the Aref régime to an end a fortnight earlier. (Paragraphs 1-3.)

2. The new Administration's proclaimed policies differ little from those of its predecessors. Policy towards the Left-wing Ba'ath régime in Syria is an important issue on which senior members of the Government may disagree. Ideological and personal differences also divide them. (Paragraphs 4-7.)

3. The Minister of Defence has, like his predecessors, shown interest in closer relations with us in the military field. The prospects of better political relations would be improved if we could find ways of helping Iraq in other fields. (Paragraphs 8-9.)

(Confidential)
Sir,

Baghdad,
15 August, 1968.

A fortnight has now elapsed since the summary dismissal on the 30th of July of Colonel Nayif and his Government which had come to power as a result of the bloodless *coup* of the 17th of July. It is now perhaps possible to submit with some prospect of not being too far from the mark some comments both on the reasons for the change and the outlook for the future.

2. The events of the 30th of July can be described in very few words. As reported in my telegram No. 148, armoured units appeared in the streets of the capital in the neighbourhood of the Presidential Palace and the broadcasting station towards 4.30 p.m. and, although civilian traffic was permitted to circulate as usual, it was assumed that political changes were in the making. When the tanks of the 10th Armoured Brigade, which was known for its support of the Ba'ath, moved into the city from the west, it was further assumed that it was a Ba'athist takeover and that Colonel Nayif, the Prime Minister, had been overthrown. This was confirmed by President Bakr, who came on the air at about 8.30 p.m.

3. Not a shot was fired. It is now known that the Prime Minister was invited to luncheon (late, as is usual in Baghdad) in the Presidential Palace and that he was arrested by his hitherto supporter, Brigadier Ghaidan, the Commander of the Republican Guard, and promptly sent abroad on board an Iraqi Air Force plane to Morocco. The occasion for the mini-*coup* was the absence in Jordan of Colonel Nayif's closest collaborator, the newly promoted General Daud, Minister of Defence and Deputy Commander-in-Chief. As regards the cause of the break-up of the apparently promising marriage between patriotic army officers whose policy was one of Iraq for the Iraqis, and of the Ba'ath Party, it is now known that it had been the intention of the Ba'athi leaders from the start to take the first opportunity to gain undisputed power. What is not quite so clear is why Brigadier Ghaidan should have so quickly betrayed his friend. However that might be, it seems that he is now day and night at President Bakr's side. The President's own position is also somewhat obscure. His broadcast after the *coup* was not convincing—in particular the allegation that Colonel Nayif had been dismissed for advocating the abolition of the Iraqi National Oil Company was not taken

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seriously—and, in marked contrast to the carefully-worded statement of policy issued at the time of the *coup d'état* of the 17th of July, bore signs of hasty drafting. There is little doubt, however, that the main instigator was General Ammash, the Minister of the Interior, aided and abetted by Abdul Karim Abdul Satter al Sheikhly, the present Minister of Foreign Affairs.

4. It is perhaps convenient at this point to consider the position of General Takriti, the Chief of Staff in the old Government and Minister of Defence in the new. He commanded the Iraqi Air Force under the Ba'ath Government of 1963. He later fell foul of the party but undoubtedly continued to have Ba'athist sympathies and maintained ties with the Right-wing Ba'ath in Syria, particularly President Hafez, until February 1966 when the latter was overthrown by the Left-wing Ba'ath. It was assumed that he and General Ammash had worked together to remove Colonel Nayif—revolt of the generals against the colonels—but it soon became apparent that all was not well between them. Indeed, the fact that General Bakr himself had to assume the Premiership, appointing Generals Takriti and Ammash as Deputy Prime Ministers, suggests that difficulties had arisen. The apparent homogeneity of the new set-up was deceptive.

5. The change of Government was followed by a number of measures which seemed in themselves eminently reasonable but which in fact revealed the doubts and weaknesses of the new Administration. Taxes were reduced (fact), a university was to be established in the north as part of the settlement of the Kurdish problem (promise) and political prisoners were released (fact). Political prisoners included several hundred Communists. This was surprising as in 1963 the Ba'ath had literally liquidated Communists. What is not generally known is that the new régime were prepared to offer the Communists representation in the Government and to form a sort of Popular Front. Apparently, owing to excessive demands of the Communists, particularly reinstatement of Communist officers in the armed forces, the project failed.

6. Returning to the Government's policy as illustrated in a number of Press interviews given by the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I should say that the pronouncements themselves are, if

not unexceptional, at least not unexpected. In internal affairs, priority is rightly given to the Kurdish question. It is unfortunate that the professed willingness of the Government to meet the Kurds' "minimum demands" as expressed in the "Manifesto" of 1966 has not been matched by the Kurds, whose lack of confidence is obvious. Though their appointments have been announced, the representatives of Mustafa Berzani, who were at least at intervals members of Governments under Aref, have still not taken the oath of office in the new. The importance of economic, particularly agricultural, problems is recognised. As regards oil, the goose that lays Iraq's golden eggs, the new Government's intentions are obscure but hope of a reasonable policy has not been lost. In foreign affairs, neutrality, suitably adjusted to the attitudes of other Powers to the Palestine question, is proclaimed and on this basis Iraq's "friends" are Soviet Russia, Red China and Gaullist France. The United Kingdom is passed over in discreet silence, not even damned with faint praise—a step forward in the context of attacks in the past, but perhaps discouraging in the context of the potential improvement in Anglo-Iraqi relations. As regards the Arab world, due reverence is paid to Arab unity and, less convincingly to Egyptian leadership. Critical will be the Government's attitude to Syria. At first sight the Right-wing Ba'ath of Iraq could be expected to sympathise with Syria's Right-wing Ba'athi leaders, in particular ex-President Hafiz and the former Prime Minister, Salah Bitar, until recently living in exile in Beirut. Both duly turned up in Baghdad after the *coup* and probably helped to patch up the cracks in the régime. The probability is that General Takriti favours an activist policy in support of the Right-wing Ba'ath for the elimination of the present Syrian régime and that General Ammash, representing more Left-wing elements in the party, would prefer an accommodation with the present extremist régime of Atassi, Za'ayin and Makhus. In either case the implications for Jordan and even more generally for the Middle East are considerable. A Ba'athist "Greater Syria" as an immediate neighbour of Israel would call for much re-thinking. There is also the risk of Syrian retaliation in the form of a closure of the IPC pipeline through Syria.

7. What I fear emerges is not a solid Ba'athist order with a reasonable prospect

of stability, but a basically divided house in which ideological and personal differences are rampant. As suggested above, President Bakr, whose health is in any case indifferent, probably finds his position delicate to say the least. The possibility of a clash between General Takriti, whose position has probably been strengthened by the reinstatement as Chief of Staff of the tough and respected General Ansari, and the probably more politically astute General Ammash, the Minister of the Interior, is very real and the odds are hard to decide. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

8. Both General Takriti and General Ansari have shown definite interest in closer relations with the United Kingdom in the military field. I therefore have no hesitation in repeating the recommendation made in my despatches (1/3) of the 20th and 27th of July that Defence and Air Attachés should be appointed without delay. In the political field, General Takriti indicated to me, as reported in my telegram No. 174 of the 12th of August, that co-operation was desirable, and even Abdul Karim al Sheikhly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that Iraq's response to any initiative on our part would be positive—please see my telegram No. 166. As always, Palestine looms large and it would certainly help if in the course of the current Security Council debate on the recent Israel air attack on Salt in Jordan or on some other suitable occasion, it could be made clear that in Her Majesty's Government's view a policy of "making the punishment fit the crime" was preferable to disproportionate retaliation against raids by Arab guerillas.

9. It is recognised, however, that in the Security Council at least as far as Palestine is concerned, our hands are to some extent tied. It occurs to me, however, that in other organs of the United Nations we might be better placed to help Iraq. I am thinking particularly of the World Bank.

Iraq's economic potential, particularly in the agricultural field, is undoubted, and thanks to its oil wealth its creditworthiness is, subject to reservations, generally accepted. But it also appears to be accepted that for a variety of reasons Iraq has not had its fair share of help from the World Bank. A project for the construction of grain silos is, however, now under active consideration. Thanks to the use of improved (FAO developed, Mexpak) seed, the grain harvest this year has been increased by 50 per cent to 1.5 million tons, giving an exportable surplus of 0.5 million tons, unfortunately at a time when storage facilities are insufficient and Iraqi prices too high for immediate sale. Appropriate support by Her Majesty's Government in the Councils of the World Bank would have its effect and be duly noted here. Perhaps this possibility can be considered? This is only one example—others will follow, for example, in the field of agriculture, where the experience of Mr. Gaitskell, former managing director of the Sudan Plantation Syndicate, has been brought to the attention of President Bakr by the United Nations Resident Representative in Baghdad, the distinguished Sudanese international civil servant, Mr. Omar Adeel. Finally, in the commercial and agricultural fields, as already suggested in my despatches referred to above, the opportunities are very real. In spite of uncertainty—the situation has not returned to normal and at the time of writing tanks are still stationed at a number of key points—the possibilities are considerable. I trust that they will not be missed.

I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Amman, Ankara, Beirut, Cairo, Jedda, Kuwait, Tehran, Tel-Aviv and Washington, to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf, and the United Kingdom Mission, New York.

I have, &c.

T. E. EVANS.

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RECEIVED 8 NOVEMBER,
1968

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MARSHAL SPYCHALSKI'S VISIT TO BAGHDAD

(MR EVANS TO MR STEWART)

BAGHDAD

2 NOVEMBER, 1968

Sir,

I have the honour to report that Marshal Marian Spychalski, the Chairman of the Council of State of the People's Republic of Poland, arrived in Baghdad on the 23rd of October to pay a State visit to Iraq at the invitation of the Iraqi President, General Ahmad Hassan al Bakr. Marshal Spychalski was accompanied by the Secretary of the Council of State, a Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, a Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade and a delegation numbering altogether fourteen. A group of Polish journalists accompanied the official party.

2. The usual ceremonies associated with a State visit took place and discussions on world affairs and relations between the two countries were held. The joint communiqué issued at the end of the visit records the identity of views of the two sides on a number of international questions. Poland supported the Arab case on Palestine and both sides called for the evacuation of Israeli troops from occupied Arab territories as a pre-condition for any settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict. The counterpart to this is Iraqi support for the Polish

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position on European problems and rejection of any attempt to change present frontiers in favour of the Federal German Republic. The Iraqis also gave their support by implication to the invasion of Czechoslovakia by agreeing with the Poles that the agreements reached in Moscow and Prague had contributed to strengthening the socialist community in Europe and thus to maintaining peace and stability in the area. On Vietnam the Iraqis subscribed to the view held by the Communist powers that United States actions in Vietnam were aggressive and that a complete halt to American bombing of the North was the essential preliminary to a peaceful settlement. The general bias towards the Communist viewpoint apparent in the communiqué was also evident in the speech made by President Bakr at his official banquet when he was outspokenly anti-American and anti-imperialist, distinctly more so than his guest. It is possible that the omission from his speech of any reference to Czechoslovakia indicates that Iraq is however less than whole-hearted in her support of the actions of the Warsaw Pact powers. Yet as previously noted the communiqué gives Iraq's approval to them, though not explicitly.

3. The communiqué dealt briefly also with the conclusions reached in the discussions on Iraqi/Polish relations. Mention was made of steps to be taken to develop their existing co-operation in economic, commercial and cultural fields and also in technical assistance. Although the Polish delegation undertook to increase purchases of Iraqi products in accordance with the provisions of the trade agreement concluded in 1959 I have learned that no decision was taken on an Iraqi request that they should buy Iraqi produce, dates, barley and wheat. The Poles also undertook to consider extending credit for projects

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carried out by Polish enterprises. A member of the Polish Embassy told my Commercial Counsellor that his country had so far given no credit for such projects and had not been able to agree to an Iraqi request for a government-to-government credit of between Iraqi Dinars 20 and 30 million to be spent as the Iraqis wished. He also said that the Poles would not be able to give credits at the low rate of 2½% usually offered by the Soviet Union; credits of four to five years at a commercial rate would be more likely.

4. In the light of your Department's instructions on attendance at functions given on the occasion of the visit and after consultation with friendly colleagues, I declined the invitation to the dinner given by Marshal Spychalski but accepted that to the banquet given by President Bakr. My senior Counsellor represented me at the ceremonies which took place on the Polish President's arrival and departure. My Soviet colleague has since spoken critically to me about the attitude of reserve adopted by the representatives of NATO powers during the visit and enquired whether I intended to absent myself from the party which he will be giving on the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution. I fear that relations with my Warsaw Pact colleagues and with the Polish Ambassador in particular will suffer in consequence of our attitude.

5. I am sending copies of this letter to HM Representatives at Warsaw, Moscow, Washington, Amman, Beirut, Cairo, Kuwait, Ankara, Tehran, Tel Aviv, Bahrain, and the UK Mission, New York.

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BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ

(MR STEWART TO MR EVANS)

FOREIGN AND COMMON-
WEALTH OFFICE

12 NOVEMBER, 1968

Sir,

Your Excellency's Despatch No. 1/3 of the 27th of July giving your first impressions of Iraq and its new government, in which you also made a number of recommendations, has been studied with much interest in the Department and in Whitehall.

It would have received an earlier reply had there not supervened the events of the 30th of July described in your Despatch of the 15th of August.

2. Your Despatch of the 27th of July gave a cautiously encouraging report of the favourable reaction in Iraq to the resumption of diplomatic relations, and of the reserve of goodwill towards Britain still existing, and recommended measures for the re-establishment of links in the cultural, military and technical assistance fields, as well as the development of personal exchanges. These recommendations provide an appropriate opportunity for the consideration of our future policy towards Iraq.

3. Your Despatch of the 27th of July analysed the failings of President Aref's régime, and the problems which faced it.

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Your predecessors, since 1958, in their despatches pointed to similar factors, and were often under the necessity of painting an even darker picture only rarely introducing a pale ray of optimism. All the difficulties that faced the forerunners of the present Iraqi government are still there; the contradiction in foreign, as in domestic and economic policies, between what is popular - at any rate among the vocal in Iraq - and what is sensible; the stagnation of agriculture and development; the alienation from government of the commercial classes; the communal religious problem; the Kurdish question and the consequent shadow over relations with Iran; inter-Arab and intra-party disputes; the list is by no means exhaustive. Nor is there on the face of it any reason to suppose that the predominantly Ba'athist government of Hassan al Bakr will be markedly more successful than its predecessors in finding solutions, and getting the country moving forward again.

4. While it is encouraging that the present government appears anxious to establish itself on a basis broader than purely Ba'athist, the record shows that ever since its foundation the Ba'ath party has displayed an inability to compromise which has severely restricted its capacity for cooperating with other political groups. Moreover, the present government, like all recent Iraqi governments, will remain dependent on the support it can command in the army; and the Iraqi army, at any rate in the middle and junior ranks of the officer corps, which, to a great extent set the tone, has not shown itself either a force for moderate and sensible policies, or well disposed to British interests.

5. It is therefore against this somewhat discouraging background that we must assess the possibilities for Anglo-Iraqi relations. We must, I think, accept that as long as the present

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military régime lasts, we are unlikely to have any reliable basis for political friendship with Iraq and that until there is a substantial change for the better, our ability to exert any political influence will be limited. We must hope that before too long there will come to power a new generation of Iraqis with a more objective and pragmatic outlook, more capable of acting in the true interests of Iraq, and for us easier to do business with.

6. In the meantime we must do what we can to protect and advance the very considerable British interests in Iraq. In the political field we shall remain concerned that Iraq should not be a force making for instability whether in the Persian Gulf, or as regards the Arab/Israel dispute, and should not serve as an instrument for Soviet policies. Commercially our interests are naturally to recover and, if possible, improve on the former level of British exports to Iraq, and above all to protect our oil interests which lie in the large British share in the British registered Iraq Petroleum Company. These last require more detailed consideration.

7. Your Excellency is aware of the company's difficulties with the Iraq government over the last ten years. Recently the chief of these have been the Iraq government's failure to ratify the abortive agreement of 1965, which would have settled all major issues in dispute, and its actions last year reinforcing earlier legislation expropriating most of the I.P.C.'s concession area and giving an active role to the Iraq National Oil Company (INOC) in exploiting this expropriation, including

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the existing valuable oil field at North Rumaila. The I.P.C. seems now to have broadly acknowledged to itself that there is no chance of recovering anything like its original rights to North Rumaila, and is working for a settlement that would salvage whatever is possible from the expropriation and preserve the company's remaining assets in Iraq without prejudicing the shareholders' interests in other oil countries. A settlement would also be in Iraqi interests in that Iraq could then arrange for the exploration and development of the I.P.C.'s former concession area uninhibited by the threat of legal proceedings, and could also expect to benefit from the development by the I.P.C., in a more settled atmosphere, of the company's remaining oil resources.

8. The I.P.C. cannot see a clear way to a settlement but is approaching the problem with flexibility. For the time being intervention by Her Majesty's Government with the Iraq Government would probably be counter-productive. Her Majesty's Government would in any event normally only intervene in matters of this kind at the request of the company. While it is possible that circumstances might arise in which intervention by Her Majesty's Government could assist in promoting an agreement, or help to protect the I.P.C. from further encroachments, you should at the moment refrain from any initiatives, however informal, and be circumspect in discussing these matters if the Iraqis should raise them. In that event you should aim to confine yourself to ensuring that the I.P.C.'s basic case does not go by default, and to stressing that a mutually acceptable settlement would be in the interest both of the

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parties, and of Anglo/Iraqi relations.

9. I should also like you to keep me closely informed of other developments in Iraq affecting our oil interests, such as the activities of INOC and the Iraqis' dealings with the foreign interests which are becoming increasingly active in seeking to benefit from the present situation. A particular point of interest, in the context of the Middle East generally as well as of Iraq, is the activity of the Soviet Union which, as you know, has already concluded with the Iraqis an agreement in principle to assist the latter in developing their oil resources.

10. Your Excellency's specific recommendations for improving our position in Iraq have been examined against the background sketched earlier in this Despatch, and also in relation to the current financial climate which compels a rigorously critical approach to proposals involving disbursement of public funds. They seem in general well suited to the circumstances. The conclusions, some of which are in process of being put into effect, are as follows:

(a) Arms Supply

We have had no occasion to refuse an export licence for military equipment since the resumption of relations. In examining any future requests for such licences, and general enquiries about our willingness to supply particular types of equipment, we shall have to take account of the principles which govern all our decisions about the supply of arms to countries in the Middle East.

/(b)

(b) Military Training

The Iraqis have in the past always been ready to pay for their training, and I do not think it would be right to provide training in the future at British expense.

(c) Service Attachés

We are ready to be as forthcoming as possible with the present Minister of Defence, but we have to remember that it was at Iraqi request that the Training Mission as well as the Service Attachés were summarily expelled in June 1967. As you know, your Defence Attaché, having received thorough training in industrial and other matters, is due to reach Baghdad this month.

(d) British Council

The return of the British Council was contingent on the approval of the Iraqi Government. Now that you have obtained this, the British Council will shortly be sending out two administrative staff, and are examining further proposals to resume operations.

(e) Reform of the Civil Service

I have misgivings about the wisdom of our offering any help in this field. The motive might be misconstrued and, even if an offer were accepted, the investment would probably be a risky one. There is the danger that the civil servants we had trained

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would be dismissed or transferred to unimportant functions. There is also the danger that we might at a later stage be accused of having tried to meddle in Iraqi internal affairs. I assume that in any case, Your Excellency would not wish the matter to go further unless the Iraqi government make a clear request for help.

(f) Technical Assistance

Your staff have been in correspondence with the Ministry of Overseas Development. We are in agreement with the Ministry's view, as expressed in Mr. McKenzie Johnston's letter MID 205/87/01 of the 28th of August, that the right course is to hasten slowly with a modest programme.

(g) Visits

We have already tried to persuade the Minister of Defence to visit Farnborough. The information budget for the current financial year makes no provision for other visits from Iraq; but modest sums could perhaps be made available if you should wish to recommend one or two visitors later this financial year. You will no doubt be making proposals in due course about possible visits next year.

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11. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Amman, Ankara, Beirut, Cairo, Jedda, Kuwait, Tehran, Tel Aviv and Washington, to the Political Resident Persian Gulf and to Her Majesty's Permanent Representative at the United Nations.

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For the Secretary of State

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IRAQ
29 November, 1968
Section 1

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THE FUTURE OF ANGLO-IRAQI RELATIONS

Mr. Trefor Evans to Mr. Stewart. (Received 29 November)

SUMMARY

1. Iraq's orientation towards Britain in the educational field is well established and is valuable to us. Money spent on the British Council's work in Iraq is a good investment. (Paragraphs 2-4.)
2. British trade with Iraq is also well established and it should be an aim of our policy to avoid creating a situation in which the Iraqi Government discriminates against British goods for political reasons. (Paragraph 5.)
3. Since our principal economic interest in Iraq is that the Iraq Petroleum Company should continue to operate profitably, a settlement of the company's dispute with the Government is highly desirable. A helpful attitude by Her Majesty's Government can do much to benefit Anglo-Iraqi relations. (Paragraph 6.)
4. There is renewed Iraqi interest in buying arms from Britain and in obtaining military training for their forces from us. Her Majesty's Government should give sympathetic consideration to any proposals for the sale to Iraq of military equipment which is largely defensive in nature. As regards offensive weapons, it should not be forgotten that other Powers are prepared to supply them and that we should not appear to be trying to keep the Iraqis tied to our apron-strings. (Paragraph 7.)
5. Palestine dominates Iraq's foreign policy, and the attitude adopted by Her Majesty's Government towards the Arab case will largely determine the temperature of official Anglo-Iraqi relations. Although our position has improved considerably since June 1967, we shall have to tread delicately in order to avoid re-awakening latent suspicion and antagonism. (Paragraph 8.)
6. Other issues of vital interest to Iraq are Kurdistan and the future of the Persian Gulf. Although the former is an internal matter, we should be prepared to give the Iraqis a sympathetic hearing when they speak to us about it. As for the Gulf, we should avoid giving them the impression that a solution is being imposed without their being consulted. (Paragraphs 9-10.)
7. Although the best use is not being made of existing financial resources, Her Majesty's Government should consider supporting Iraq's requests to the World Bank for aid for economic and social development. British firms should be encouraged to participate in the sensible development of Iraqi industry. (Paragraph 11.)
8. Relations between Britain and Iraq can be improved only in the most gradual way. We should develop the positive elements in our relationship irrespective of the stability or otherwise of the Government of the day. (Paragraph 12.)

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(Confidential) Baghdad,
Sir, 23 November, 1968.

Six months have passed since the reopening of this post which had been closed since the Iraqis broke off relations at the time of the six-day war with Israel. The break of relations and the expulsion of my predecessor and his staff mark perhaps a stage in Iraq's development as an independent State, since these actions demonstrated that she was indeed able to cut the ties with the Power that had in large measure created her after the First World War and had exercised a predominant influence over her for almost 40 years. The bitter experience of the diplomatic break, though it was brought about through hasty and emotional reaction to allegations which were later disproved, may nevertheless be the prelude to a period in which Anglo-Iraqi relations are less hampered by the legacy of the past and are based to a greater extent on present-day realities. The links between the two countries are substantial and are found in many spheres of activity, and I now have the honour to review the most important of them and to offer my comments on ways in which they can be strengthened to our advantage.

2. Although the period of direct and indirect British domination of Iraq has left an impression on Anglo-Iraqi relations which is not uniformly favourable to their development in present circumstances, the orientation towards Britain in the field of education which resulted from that period is an undoubted asset and one that could well appreciate in value. The professional middle class, including the officer class, contains a large proportion of men and women who have received their training in the United Kingdom; others have studied in Iraqi institutions where British influence has been strong and in which English was the language of instruction. Although in recent years greater numbers than before have pursued their studies in the United States and in Eastern and Western Europe, I doubt whether the number of those in Britain has fallen in absolute terms; it is said to be as many as 1,700 at the present time. On the whole the impression which Iraqi students form of Britain and of the British on their home ground is a favourable one, and they have considerable regard for the quality of British society and institutions. A number of them take British wives, though fewer

are likely to do so because the Government have recently announced that Iraqis who marry non-Arab wives in future will be ineligible for civil service posts.

3. The wish of middle-class Iraqis and of those who aspire to middle-class status to acquire education in Britain, or at least to learn English, is something which is likely to continue, even if we do little actively to encourage it. The habit has been formed, personal links exist, the widespread teaching of English in Iraqi schools makes it easier for young people to pursue their studies in English than in any other foreign language, and the flow of undergraduate and post-graduate students to Britain has therefore acquired a momentum of its own. There can be little doubt that this situation is of benefit to us as well as to the Iraqis who acquire education from us. They are enabled to put to use their human potential (and it is encouraging to see what good results education can produce from Iraqi material); we acquire prestige as being people who have knowledge to impart; we derive commercial advantage through their familiarity with British methods and products and we can reasonably hope that in time the growing civilian professional and middle classes will come to exercise a political influence which the military dictatorship at present largely denies them. One cannot claim that this hope has a clear expectation of fulfilment: the future political development of Iraq is particularly difficult to forecast, but it is to be hoped that the desire of a notable proportion of the educated minority for decent government will gradually bring about some improvement of standards.

4. If this analysis is correct, I consider that it would be a wise investment to spend money to encourage the processes which I have described. A large part of the credit for the position which British education and culture now hold in Iraq is undoubtedly due to the work of the British Council. Through its teaching of English, the provision of a library of books in English, the offer of scholarships and the help given to those who wish to pursue their studies in Britain the Council has been the prime instrument which has brought about British cultural pre-eminence among educated Iraqis. Comparatively modest expenditure on the Council's activities in this country will enable it to continue its valuable role.

5. The historical factors which have led to the orientation towards Britain in the cultural field have also contributed to the favourable position Britain enjoys in commerce. British-made goods predominated when Iraq made its first acquaintance with the products of the industrialised West, and it was natural that a high proportion of trade in these goods should later be directed towards the Western country with which Iraq had closest contact. Trade followed the flag, and while Iraq was within the British sphere of influence, which one might say was up until the *coup d'état* of 1958, the lion's share of the development contracts which laid the foundation of a modern developing State went to British firms. Although the position has changed considerably since then in that the Government and the market are more knowledgeable about other industrialised countries and more willing to trade with them, trade with Britain continued at a high level until June 1967, even though our share of trade decreased. The fall in British exports to this market which resulted from official discrimination against British goods during the break in diplomatic relations may prove to have been no more than a temporary setback, unless another situation arises in which Iraq decides to discriminate against us once more for political reasons. Clearly, it should be an aim of our policy to avoid creating such a situation.

6. Our principal economic interest in Iraq is, of course, that the Iraq Petroleum Company should continue to operate profitably. Through its large investments in this country, the company is able to make a valuable contribution to the United Kingdom's balance of payments and to the United Kingdom's requirements for oil. The company's position is, however, threatened by the dispute arising from the host Government's nationalisation of the bulk of its concessionary area which has embittered their relations and made mutually profitable co-operation in the further exploitation of Iraqi oil problematical. A settlement of the dispute on terms acceptable to the company is therefore highly desirable from Her Majesty's Government's point of view since it would not only ensure the continuation of the company's operations, with all the benefits they bring to the United Kingdom, but would also remove a major obstacle to the improvement of Anglo-Iraqi relations. A dispute between the Government and the

British company which runs Iraq's most important industry and which provides by far the greater part of Iraq's foreign exchange earnings cannot fail to have a harmful effect on British Governmental relations with Iraq, and it is inevitable from the Iraqi viewpoint that they should look to Her Majesty's Government for assistance in the matter. The part which Her Majesty's Government can play is limited, and it is essential that the Iraqi authorities should understand that it is so; but it is also important that we should appear to them to be being helpful within the limits imposed by the nature of our relationship with the company. It need hardly be said that we must avoid being used by the Iraqis as an instrument to bring pressure on the company; yet there are times when we can contribute to a more just appreciation by the company of the consequences of the various lines of approach open to them. A helpful attitude based on the common interest of all concerned in maintaining and increasing the flow of oil can do much to benefit the wider cause of relations between the two countries.

7. The armed forces have dominated Iraq's political life for the last 10 years, and the purchase of arms has been one of their main preoccupations—ostensibly because of the need for strength to face external enemies but also for reasons of prestige and in order to tighten their grip on power. They have also hoped at various times, vainly, that modern weapons of war would allow them to bring about a military solution of the Kurdish rebellion, which is a serious source of internal weakness. Since 1958 the Soviet Union has been Iraq's principal supplier of arms and aircraft, although Britain also has sold fighter planes and helicopters. Since our resumption of diplomatic relations, however, and particularly since the appointment of General Hardan al-Takriti as Minister of Defence and Deputy Prime Minister, there have been clear signs of Iraqi interest in the purchase of more British equipment, aircraft, an air defence system and military vehicles, and in British military training. An important element in their thinking is probably the wish not to become over-committed to the Soviet Union; another factor is respect for British equipment and for British military methods dating from the days of close association between the forces of the two countries which lasted until the overthrow of the monarchy. Our

reaction to any proposed sale of equipment to Iraq must obviously depend on an assessment of the use they are likely to make of it. In the light of the Iraqi threat to Kuwait, the British commitment to defend Kuwait has naturally figured largely in our thinking in the past and will continue to do so so long as it remains valid, although it appears from a recent conversation between Her Majesty's Ambassador in Kuwait and the Kuwaiti Prime Minister that the Kuwaitis themselves would not object to the sale of British aircraft. We cannot be entirely certain, however, that the Kuwaitis are correct in apparently dismissing the possibility of a renewed threat from Iraq; the Kurdish and Palestine problems are admittedly likely to preoccupy the Iraqis, but the Kuwaitis and their friends would be unwise not to guard against the risk that an opportunist régime in Iraq would take advantage of instability in the Gulf either before or after our withdrawal. Even apart from the particular problem of Kuwait, it would clearly not be in our interest that an unfriendly Iraq should have powerful and effective forces capable of operating outside her own frontiers. There is, however, a considerable range of equipment which we could sell and which would not bring about that result. An air defence system, for example, and aircraft for a defensive role would not increase Iraq's ability to trouble her neighbours, yet would be valuable British exports which would moreover tend to pull Iraq back from an extreme anti-Western stance. In my submission, therefore, Her Majesty's Government should give sympathetic consideration to any proposals which may materialise for the purchase by Iraq of military equipment which is largely defensive in nature. As regards offensive weapons, it should not be forgotten that other Powers are prepared to supply them and also that it can do us no good to appear to the Iraqis to be trying to keep them on our apron strings.

8. It is Palestine, however, which dominates Iraq's foreign policy, and the attitude adopted by Her Majesty's Government towards the Arab case will largely determine the temperature of official Anglo-Iraqi relations. While Iraqi Governments for the past 30 years have devoted particular attention to the question of Palestine, the practical effect has been slight, probably because it has arisen more out of a need to find at least one cause on which Iraqis could agree than out of deeply-felt emotion,

though that too does exist. Nevertheless, perhaps because of their inability to influence events in Palestine directly, Iraqi Governments tend to adopt extreme positions in any discussion of Arab rights and to seize on other ways of proving their devotion to the cause, for example by breaking off diplomatic relations with the "aggressor States" in June 1967 and advocating a ban on oil exports. Since then Her Majesty's Government have succeeded in demonstrating that their policies are not wholly opposed to Arab interests and the Iraqis now accept that at least part of the blame should fall on the Arabs for the general lack of understanding of the Arab case in Western Europe at the time of the six-day war. Much suspicion still remains however, particularly among Left-wing elements, including the Ba'ath Party itself, and we shall have to tread delicately if all the latent antagonisms are not to be aroused when, as is inevitable, we are unable to go as far as the Arabs demand in, for instance, condemning Israel in the Security Council or in imposing mandatory sanctions or in withholding supplies of arms. Any one of many such issues could leave Her Majesty's Government exposed to Iraq's angry disappointment and to the risk of retaliation, whether by riot, severance of diplomatic relations, trade boycott or a combination of these and other measures. These considerations are, I know, well understood by your Department, and I mention them again merely to indicate the important part which our attitude in the United Nations and elsewhere to the Palestine problem plays in Iraq's assessment of the state of Anglo-Iraqi relations.

9. There are of course other issues too which are of vital interest to Iraq, and the more understanding and sympathy we can show for the Iraqi point of view, for Iraq's difficulty and for her legitimate aspirations, the more influence we are likely to have here. The first of these issues is that of Kurdistan. Kurdish Nationalism has bedevilled the Iraqi State since its creation and, to the extent that Her Majesty's Government were responsible for the inclusion of Kurdish areas within the new State, it can be argued that Her Majesty's Government have some obligation in the matter. On the other hand, it is clearly necessary that nothing is done to impair our friendly relations with neighbouring Turkey and Iran, both of which are deeply concerned in the Kurdish question. For this reason, notwithstanding our interest in the

stability of Iraq and of its increasing prosperity, our policy has been one of non-interference in what is primarily an internal matter for Iraq. In general our attitude has met with the approval of the Iraqi Government. There have been occasions, however, when the Government of the day have asked us to use our influence in Tehran in favour of a settlement. On the last occasion, which was a few months ago, Her Majesty's Ambassador in Tehran took a suitable opportunity to mention to the Iranian authorities Iraqi concern at developments in Northern Iraq. Although there was little reaction, the effort was, I have no doubt, worth while and it is encouraging that the Iranians at several levels are more than ready to discuss the situation in Iraq which is naturally of very considerable interest to them. From the point of view of our relations with Iraq, the important thing is that Iraqis should feel able to speak to us about their difficulties and to be sure of having at least a sympathetic hearing.

10. Developments in the Persian Gulf in the light of the impending British military withdrawal is another subject that the Iraqi Government can be expected to raise with us in due course. Although Saudi Arabia and Iran are obviously more directly concerned, it would be wrong, I submit, to cold-shoulder the Iraqis and to give them the impression that a solution is being imposed upon them without any prior consultation. Again it is a question of gaining their confidence and thereby increasing our influence here.

11. Finally, I come to the question of aid for economic and social development to which I referred briefly in paragraph 9 of my despatch 1/3 of the 15th of August. Since that despatch was written, representatives of the World Bank have visited Iraq and have shown interest in a number of projects, including agricultural ones. This is encouraging, as relations between the bank and Iraq during recent years have been unhappy and unproductive—in 1964 and 1966 negotiations for the financing of projects in the fields of agriculture and road building were abortive. There is, of course, no doubt that the best use is not being made of existing financial resources, particularly those accruing from oil revenues—an undue proportion is being spent on armaments—but this is a common phenomenon in under-developed countries. There is abundant evidence that the country is suffering from a shortage of revenue and

that day-to-day administration, not to mention development, in the provinces, is suffering from it. It is also encouraging that the President and his closest advisers are attaching the greatest importance to rural development in an effort to curb the disastrous influx of population into the towns and, according to the Minister of Planning, 70 per cent of the next Five-year Plan will be devoted to improving conditions in the countryside. I therefore have no hesitation in repeating my previous recommendation that Her Majesty's Government should consider giving, and be seen to be giving, the Iraqi Government the maximum possible support in the Councils of the World Bank. Similarly, I trust that encouragement will be given to British firms, particularly the British Leyland Motor Corporation and Massey Ferguson, who are showing interest in participation in the sensible development of Iraqi industry.

12. It would, of course, be an illusion to think that relations between the two countries can be improved in anything other than the most gradual way. Britain is still remembered as the former occupying Power, and it is not fashionable in the Middle East to think well, let alone speak well, of former occupiers. We are also remembered as the Power during whose period of supremacy the foundations of the State of Israel were laid, and so long as the Arabs feel humiliation at the hands of Israel, the Iraqis will resent the part we played in setting the stage for their humiliation. As if this were not enough, their economy is almost wholly dependent on an ostensibly British oil company which is considered to be working primarily in the interest of forces outside Iraq which are not susceptible to Iraqi control. And yet, as I have tried to show in this and other reports, there are positive elements in their relationship with us which can be developed to our mutual advantage. They should not, I suggest, be neglected, irrespective of the stability or otherwise of the Government of the day.

13. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Amman, Ankara, Beirut, Cairo, Jedda, Kuwait, Tehran, Tel Aviv and Washington and to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf and the United Kingdom Mission in New York.

I have, &c.

T. E. EVANS.